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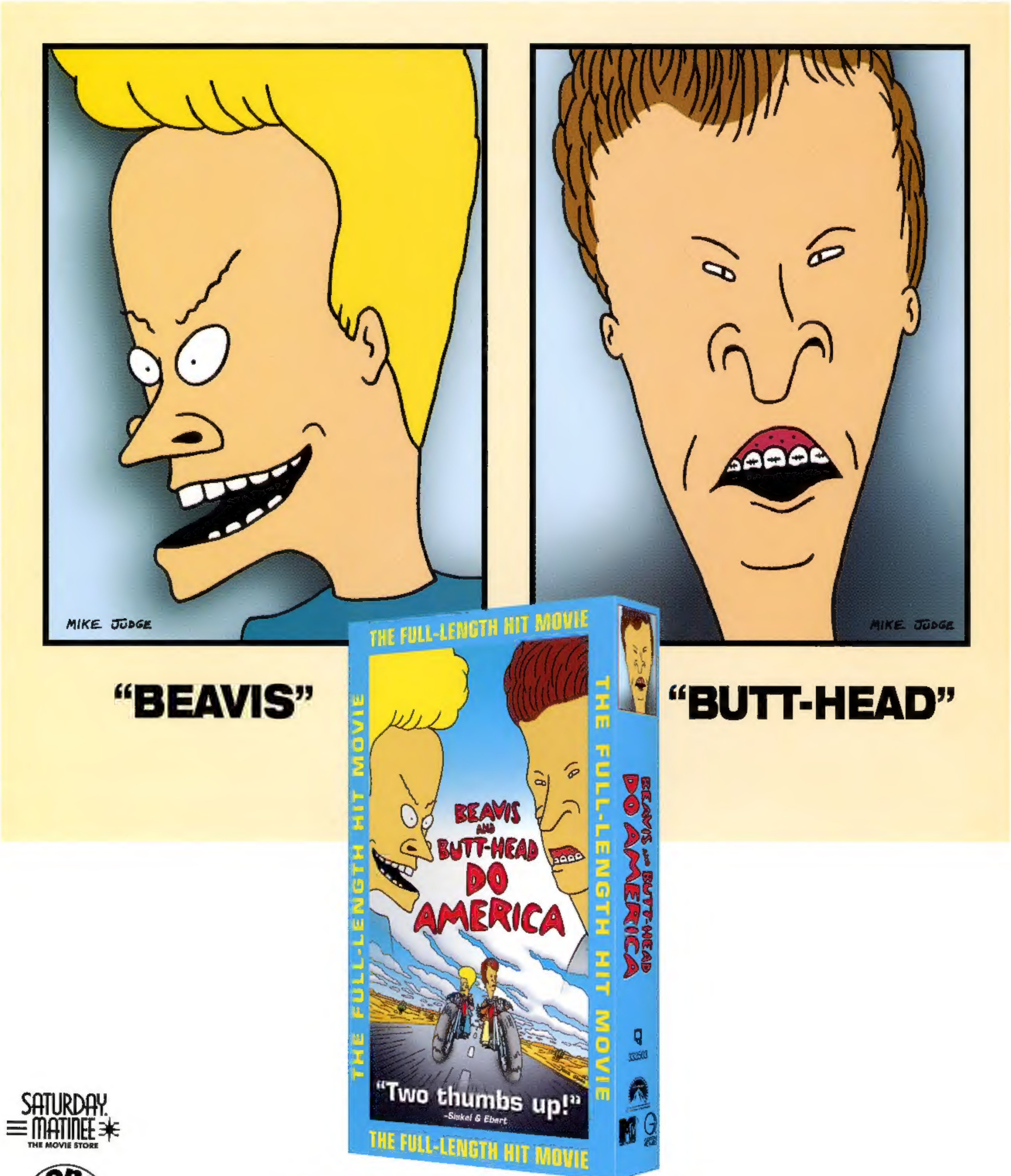

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MARVEL VISION #27

MARCH 199~~7~~8

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VISION

March 1997

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Still Dreaming of Alien Autopsies

Rich Rable
Still Playing Without a Handicap

The holiday season is upon us and Marvel's House of Ideas is probably the busiest that it's been all year. We editors are pushed to the max to make sure all of our books that have to make it to you by the end of the year actually do.

Do all these extra hours and extra stress diminish our love for what we do? Well, not me. Julio and I are putting together this issue of VISION with a December 4th deadline; I'm writing this on November 19th so we just might make it. If we don't, then it's another visit from Bob Harras's trusty flying dictionary.

For all of those concerned readers out there (I think there are two of you), Bob uses a paperback edition. I guess helping to raise his triplets has left him a little too weak to heft that hardcover version.

I probably won't be writing another one of these until after the New Year, so I'd like to thank all of the writers and designers who made this one of VISION's best.

So sit back and enjoy this last issue of VISION for 1997 and Julio and I will visit you again next year.

Happy Holidays
I'm done.

Tim Tuohy

OOOPS!
Apologies go out to writer Dean Davis for a boo-boo in his article on Sidekicks in the Marvel Universe. Thor's Hammer was included in a section regarding inanimate sidekicks such as Cap's shield as well as a section about the same subject but with similarities to the Surfer's board. It should have only been in the section with the Surfer's board; the hammer can return to Thor when he summons it as he did in the "Worldengine" saga. Sorry, Dean.

MARVEL VISION insights

Dear INSIGHTS,

Ever since Carlos Pacheco started penciling, I have been a big X-Men fan. Then I picked up X-MEN #69 and saw Salvador Larroca's pencils and was amazed. What are some other books Salvador has done?

Well, thanks for giving us this great magazine. Keep up the good work.

Nathan Long
1704 North Key Blvd.
Midwest City, OK 73110

Salva, as he is called around the office, has been working at Marvel for quite awhile now. He started working for Bobbie Chase on GHOST RIDER and then did the few odd penciling jobs here and there before landing the plum assignment of the HEROES RETURN limited series. From there he will be taking over the penciling chore on the FANTASTIC FOUR.

In VISION #24 we printed a letter from a reader named Dennis Cooper who expessed his opinion about religion in Marvel Comics, specifically the effect that Christianity would have on Gambit. We now present two more views on the subject.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I would like to commend you on your reply to the venomous letter submitted by the religion-phobic, Dennis Cooper, who is not only offended by Gambit's Catholic background, but seems to be suspicious of all Christian storylines in the Marvel universe.

Since we currently live in a society that has been overrun by a politically correct juggernaut, it is unconscionable that this reader can be so unaware of the importance of being religiously sensitive. I am confident that similar comments would not be espoused if the plots dealt with a Native American, a homosexual, a Jew, a Muslim, or an African-American.

Today, however, it is almost chic to vilify Catholicism as it stands as a bulwark against neo-paganism and pervasive secularism. To highlight the significance of this situation, Harvard professor Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. once said that prejudice against the Catholic Church was the deepest bias in the history of the American people. Mirroring these sentiments are those of David Reinhard, Editorial Board member of the Oregonian who also added, "Anti-Catholicism is the bigotry some have called the thinking person's anti-Semitism, the bigotry that survives, if not flourishes, even in our politically correct age."

As a devout Roman Catholic and reader of Marvel comics for twenty years, I find solace in the fact that characters like Gambit, Daredevil, and Nightcrawler struggle with their faith as they are confronted by incredible amounts of adversity and pain. What Mr. Cooper fails to understand is that the Catholic Church is counter-cultural, teaching moral truths which serve as anchors of comfort and guidance to millions in ways that situationalism, relativism, and nihilism can never match

Although the intelligensia have yet to invite Catholics in out of the rain and offer them a dry, warm spot under the PC umbrella, while at the same time society calls for tolerance and diversity in so many other areas. I applaud your efforts in defending Christian readers rights to participate in the lives of Marvel's characters without being made to feel uncomfortable or having to justify a 2,000 year old faith tradition.

Christopher M. Shea
4336 Worth Drive east
Jacksonville, FL 32207

Dear INSIGHTS,

Marvel VISION #24 was my first ever issue, and it was a thoroughly enjoyable issue. That said, I feel the need to respond to a Mr. Dennis Cooper, whose letter appeared in the letters page of the same issue. I do not read GAMBIT or any X-Title. This letter is for principle's sake.

In my relatively few years, I have been exposed to many kinds of books, including novels published by Bethany House, Crossway, and Tyndale House, and Non-fiction by Zondervan-all religious publishers. Many of the characters were rendered two-dimensional by the Christian influence; others were enhanced by it. This is the responsibility of the writer. Remember, successful characters often have an element of realism to them and exciting and charismatic people exist in all religions. A good writer can create real people without ignoring the spiritual aspect.

As to the assertion that respect for others is right and disrespect wrong, how do we know? There are Satan worshipers in the world; perhaps they believe differently. Or those who believe that right and wrong are determined by the individual. Would an atheist reject any hero for having a absolute standard of right and wrong if it might be determined by the Bible? Or does the hero have to come right out and say, "I am a card carrying member of the First Church of Thus-and-Thus" to rouse his ire? One of my friends has joked that Captain America must be a Southern Baptist. Yet according to a Baptist pastor I spoke to, many of his congregation neither know nor care what the Baptist Convention is.

As to Gambit being ruined by Christianity, I respectfully disagree. His well known troublemaking image doesn't have to be cleaned up. I have yet to meet a completely sinless person of any religion. Like the bumper sticker says, Christians aren't perfect-just forgiven."

Why is Catholicism so popular in Marvel comics? The history! I am not a Catholic, but the traditions of Catholicism, as well as the architecture of many Catholic churches make it a rich and distinctive group. Why film a movie about Lawrence of Arabia on a sandy sound stage if one has the capability to film it in Arabia itself?

Bek Hendershot
Address withheld upon request.

One of the qualities that we try to encourage in the VISION letters page is a free expression of ideas and philosophies on comics as a whole. Whether or not Gambit would have been tarnished is of course completely up to the way the writer handled it. Religion for some is just another part of life. The addition of religion, or anything else for that matter can only bring another layer of realism to these quite fictional characters.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I wanted to write to tell you what I think about Marvel Comics and the direction it's

headed. Yes, I do confess, I'm a Marvel junkie.

I believe that Marvel Comics is off and running in the right direction and the stuff that's coming up is too cool. I've read the promo to the Heroes Return and I can't wait. I'll be glad when the Heroes Reborn series is done with. My quip with the series isn't the artists nor the storyline, but when a particular issue came out.

First, September 1996, the first issue of FANTASTIC FOUR, CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON MAN, and the AVENGERS. They came out in that order. The following month, the AVENGERS and CAPTAIN AMERICA were switched. Then six months later the titles were coming out late. For example, The FANTASTIC FOUR, scheduled to come out during the first week, would not appear until the third week. Even worse, IRON MAN and CAP wouldn't appear until the first week of the following month. I do hope that when those titles are back into the Marvel Universe, their schedule will be back on track.

Along with that, I collect all the X-Books and all other titles that brought back my old favorites.

Before I close, I must ask you one thing, when will Marvel's Silliest Moments involve the X-Men?

Palmer Lee Berry
505 East College St.
Apt 4-d
Bridgewater, VA 22812

Scheduling and shipping are the two biggest headaches that any editor must face on a daily basis. When one sits back and thinks about the logistics of getting a 22-page book out, worked on by at least five different and talented people, the mind boggles. On the majority we do get it right.

There are just way too many silly moments involving the X-Men. We'd have to have a whole issue just devoted to all of Kitty Pryde's early attempts at a costume.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I am writing in response to Steven Yamashita's letter in Marvel VISION #24. Steven wrote a great letter and posed a great question. I'd like to express my opinion in response to when the Silver Age ended.

The Silver Age ended in 1982. Marvel Super Hero Contest of Champions marked the beginning of the Bronze Age and thus, the end of the Silver Age. Consequently, the Bronze Age ended with SPIDER-MAN #1 and thus began the current age we are in, The New Age.

The Bronze Age was characterized by three powerful ideas which will influence comics for a long time. The three main influences of the Bronze Age were large event driven stories, new costumes and images for the characters, and artistic influence. The Silver Age ended because the Marvel Universe had come full circle. It was time to take the Marvel Universe in a new, exciting direction.

The large event stories of the Bronze Age were the Contest of Champions, Secret Wars, Mutant Massacre, and many others. crossovers became common. crossovers were almost nonexistent in the Silver Age. But they did exist.

The heightened focus on what characters looked like can be summed up as new costumes and new relationships. Almost every major character received a new look in the Bronze Age. Thor Spidey, Iron Man, Hulk, Captain America, The Angel were all major Marvel characters who received new images.

Finally, artistic influence on Marvel characters became unbelievable. People no longer became concerned about what Spider-Man was doing, but rather who Spider-Man was being drawn by.

The current Marvel Age we are in right now, the New Age is also interesting. But that's chit-chat for another debate. I will add though, that cover prices, larger character storylines, and an attempt to make new characters will add to Marvel's greatness, and some fine examples of the New Age.

Of course this letter is purely speculative. Maybe the Silver Age has never really ended at all. Finally, on a deeper level, you can always find signals of a coming age in the current age. Examples of the Bronze Age can be found in the Silver Age and examples of the New Age can be found in the Bronze Age. Right now we are witnessing examples of the upcoming mysterious age-can you spot them?

Brendan Walsh
1501 Hood
Chicago, IL 60660

Whoa! That's a lot to take in, Brendan. I'm sure that our resident historian Peter Sanderson may have some thoughts on the subject so why don't we toss this over to him. Peter, if you will...?

I've already addressed this sublect in VISION #24, but I'll recap my position briefly. Everyone can agree on roughly when the Golden Age ended and the Silver Age began because, with a few exceptions, super hero comics disappeared for half a decade in between.

Ever since 1961 Marvel has been publishing super hero comics without a stop. You'll never get an agreement on when the Silver Age stopped and a new period began because people will never agree on where to draw the dividing line.

If dividing the last 37 years of comics history into "ages" helps you get a better grasp of it, fine. But realize your divisions might not be the same as other people might make.

For example, I would disagree with the idea that the Silver Age ended in 1982, because there's a big difference between the generation of the founders (Stan & Jack & company) and the first wave of Marvel's fans-turned-pros who followed them.

SECRET WARS, though, certainly did start a major trend in comocs history: the rise of "event" stories that fed the speculator boom, with the results we now see. That Trend is dying.

I'd also agree that there are signs of the future all around us, but <u>which</u> possible future will prevail? The new manga-influenced comics? The Busiek/Waid style of more "positive" comics? The 1990's "Grim and Gritty" books like PREACHER? Or all of the above?

--Peter Sanderson

Dear INSIGHTS,

We here at Elite 4 are mad. How could this be? In November you will be stripping Captain America and the Fantastic Four of over 30 years of history. In November when their reintroduction into Marvel continuity happens, you will begin their numbering with #1.

Captain America should most definitely start with #455. The legacy of this comic, that started in 1968 with #100 should be continued. Just think of all the great things that have happened in this comic: #117—first appearance of the Falcon. #180—the first appearance of Nomad. #332-#350—Steve Rogers quits being cap, Johnny Walker takes over only to be defeated by Steve in issue #350. The Waid/Garney issues. And

the upper management wants to take that away so they can make more money with another #1 issue. Trust us whether it's issue #1 or #455, it will make a lot of money.

The Fantastic Four's first issue in 1961 was what started the current age of comics. Call it what you will, "The Modern Age" or "The Marvel Age," and it is widely accepted that the FF started it all. Dr. Doom popped up for the first time in issue #5. Alicia Masters, who is very important to the current Silver Surfer stories, made her debut in #8. Issues #48-50 are some of the most important to ever come out of the Marvel Universe. In issue #150 we saw the marriage of Crystal to Quicksilver. #347-349 saw a new FF with Spider-Man, Ghost Rider, Hulk, and Wolverine.

I know you probably had little to do with this change, but could you please pass this letter on to Bob Harras or someone else who could make some sort of change? Even Stan Lee if need be. We really don't care who makes the change, just so long as it is made. The Heroes deserve those high numbers; they come with respect. Issues numbered 1 are a dime a dozen. Please give the heroes their respectful numbers, and that goes for Iron Man and the Avengers as well.

The Elite 4
Maria DeLucia
Richard Layman
Kristin Giles
Albert Restaino
(Address withheld by request)

The debate on the numbering on the returning heroes books will continue long after their return. Just remember that the history doesn't end with a number change. We editors at Marvel care about the past of our characters as much as their future. Trust us that we have their best interests in mind.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I'm just starting on the second volume of ESSENTIAL SPIDER-MAN and I am enjoying reading stories I haven't read since they first came out. Before getting the first volume I kind of mentally prepared myself for being disappointed, just in case. I was thinking that something I liked as a kid might not hold much appeal for me three decades later. I needn't have worried. Stan Lee's crackling dialog is still terrific after all these years.

I used to think that I gave up reading comics because I outgrew them. But after reading ESSENTIAL, I'm now convinced that I stopped reading SPIDER-MAN because Stan Lee stopped writing it. I know I don't need to tell anyone this, but Stan could be as funny as the next guy. If a writer can make you laugh and care about the main character, what more could you ask for?

Over the last 2 years I've been gently dipping into comics again. And so far the only writer I've developed a loyalty to is Kurk Busiek. I have all the issues of UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN and I can't imagine anyone doing a better job than Kurt did. I'm going to follow him into IRON MAN and THE AVENGERS when he takes over those because I'm confident that he'll do a teriffic job.

Lastly, since I read absolutely no comics from about 1972 through 1995, I wonder if you could recommend a couple of writers and/or artists and the titles they worked on from that time frame that you consider exceptionally good. It'll give me a starting point in exploring my dark period all over again.

Richard Stephenson
15903 Lakewood Blvd.
Bellflower, CA 90706

Welcome back to the fold, Richard. It's great to have you back. Julio and I share your admiration for Kurt Busiek and both of us follow THUNDERBOLTS regularly. Stan is of course "The Man" and no one should ever forget that. People who are familiar with this column know well of my efforts to get all of the early FANTASTIC FOUR issues. Not only were they amazing to look at, but they were a great read as well.

I can only answer for myself about what books to recommend to you, so here goes. One cannot miss out on the absolutely incredible run that Chris Claremont and John Byrne had on THE UNCANNY X-MEN. That run began with issue #108 and lasted uninterrupted from issue #109 to #143. I was also a big fan of the David Michelinie and John Romita Jr. issues of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. Those issues were in the early to mid '80s. Finally there's THE MICRONAUTS. Hmm, go figure since I'm going to be the editor of the relaunch of that title in 1998.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I've been a Marvel fan for over a decade and the cast of Marvel characters and their fictional world means a great deal to me. I am aware that Marvel has been in serious and worsening financial problems for quite some time. Even with the shadow of those problems overhead for so long, I was still shocked senseless the other day when I heard the news that Marvel might be shut down and its characters liquidated by the end of the week. I waited anxiously for days, hoping for some, any good news. I was relieved to hear that Marvel had, at least temporarily been given a slight reprieve.

I don't even know if there will be anyone there to receive this letter, but I wanted to let you people know how I feel. In recent years many people, fans, and professionals alike have taken to the bashing of Marvel, its editorial staff, and its creative persons. Sometimes it might have meant as constructive criticism or a legit gripe from a disappointed fan, but much of it was ill-informed, venomous nonsense. Much of it started and fueled by arrogant and ungrateful pros who made their careers at Marvel. This was harmful, not only to Marvel, but to the entire comic book industry.

But what's done is done. All I know is how much I admire you that you have stuck it out and done an outstanding job of putting out high quality material. I've heard so many ignorant people say that the people at Marvel don't care about the books and characters entrusted to them. NONSENSE! I know those that work at Marvel and they are not talentless hacks some few have made them out to be. Why would anyone want to be a hack in an unfortunately small and possibly dying industry? Certainly not for the money. I'm sure that the talented people that work so hard or Marvel do so because they genuinely care for Marvel's rich history and want their chance to play in the sandbox as the late Mr. Gruenwald put it.

Although Marvel may or may not be around in the months to come. I just want all of you there as well as those who sadly lost their jobs there, and those that are no longer with us, to know how much all of your hard work and dedication has meant to me. I'm sure Gru would be proud. Ask any true Marvel fan and I'm sure they'll say the same. I do hope that this letter isn't too stupid, but I needed to write it.

Hope Foronda
186 Spring Street
Hampton, VA 23669

Thank you very much for your support, Hope. Working at Marvel is sometimes a day-to-day experience and sometimes it's just like old home week. Be confident that we care about what we put out, care about our characters and of course care about the fans. Whatever Marvel's future is don't worry. It'll take more than uppity banks to shut us down. Galactus is a whole other story.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I haven't written many letter to Marvel in the past few years, so there are several topics I want to address.

First, I hope Marvel realizes what a gem Marvel has unearthed in Joe Kelly. I've been reading comics for almost a quarter century and DEADPOOL is the first series that consistently makes me laugh out loud. I can't wait to see what he has planned for his run on X-MEN.

Another thing on my mind is Marvel's Malibu properties. The huge success of MEN IN BLACK, coupled with the upcoming Nightman syndicated series has really focused a spotlight on the Malibu acquisitions. This being said, don't you think the time has come to fold some of the more interesting Ultraverse characters into mainstream Marvel continuity?

Imagine Prime in Kurt Busiek's AVENGERS or as the focal point of a NEW WARRIORS relaunch. Ponder the comic possibilities of a meeting between the Ultraverse's (not X-FORCES's) Siryn and Deadpool, scripted by the aforementioned Joe Kelly.

And I firmly believe that Barry Windsor-Smith's bad boy Rune would fit in well with Marvel's new code free horror books. Rune, Prince of Void vs. Dracula, Lord of the Undead is a story I would particularly love to see.

It would also be nice to see some of the 2099 characters again. Unlike the Ultraverse characters I don't think the guys and gals from the future should be brought permanently into present day continuity, but what would be the harm in having them journey into our time for the duration of a limited series or at least an annual? Think it over.

Greg McDonald
616 Oakdale Drive
Gadsden, AL 35903

Every letters page we do seems to have at least one letter about the Malibu properties. As of this writing there are no plans for them to be incorporated into the Marvel Universe. With the returning heroes and all of our relaunches as well as new launches, the time for the Ultraverese may not be right.

However, look for a future MEN IN BLACK limited series to come your way in the summer of 1998 written by their creator Lowell Cunningham.

Finally due to Marvel's commitment to make all of our comics accessible to all ages, the non-code approved book idea has been scrapped. Those books will still be coming out but they will be appropriate for all. Remember that during TOMB OF DRACULA's entire run, it was Comics Code approved. Good horror doesn't need cursing and nudity.

Thanks for writing and e-mailing!

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MARVEL MEDIA WINNER

Back in issue #24, as part of the "Reel Marvel" article, we tried to stump all of you readers with some Marvel Media questions. Below are those questions and the answers, see if you were able to get these and let's all congratulate

Don Cleveland!

Don was the first person to correctly answer all 5 questions. What did he win? A HULK: TRANSFORMATIONS trade paperback, that's what.

1. Name the only Marvel feature film ever released to theatres in the US: Howard The Duck (1986)

2. Name the only Marvel feature film made that has never been released anywhere: Fantastic Four (1993)

3. Name the two Marvel direct-to-video films: The Punisher (1990) and Captain America (1990)

4. Name Marvel's only feature serial: Captain America (1943)

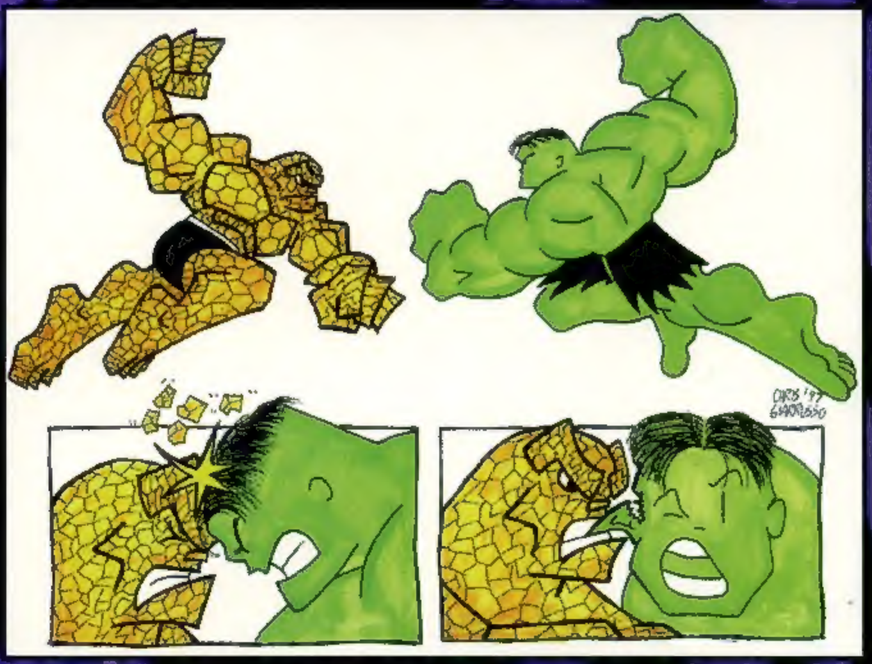
5. Name the animated Marvel film released in Japan: Dracula (based on The Tomb Of Dracula)

Thanks to everyone else who entered.

Sam Dickerson
Isaac Dickerson
Mike Gross
Ashley Moore
Christopher Currie
Stephen Schneider
Tom Anderson

Write in to: Marvel VISION Insights c/o Marvel Comics 387 Park Avenue South New York NY 10016. Or E-Mail to: TIMM2E@ aol.com Addresses will be withheld at the writer's request.

Andrea Cinque
Age 28
Rome, Italy



Andrea Cinque

Chris Giarrusso

DEADPOOL

He's the merc with a mouth, a twisted toon with a 'tude. Color him crazy 'cause Deadpool is his name and troublemaking is his game. Throw him into any chaotic situation and he'll come out on top, serving up wisecracks and dishing out the broken bones. But have you noticed a change in Deadpool's cheery disposition recently? The escalating violent behavior? The uncertainty about his future? His choice in toilet paper? There's a storm brewing here and beginning with his one year anniversary, Deadpool's life comes tumbling down!

"At the end of this year, we start this Drowning Man arc," explains writer Joe Kelly (DAREDEVIL, X-MEN). "The whole year he's been trying to be good and that kinda catches up with him in a short period of time. Through a series of events, he messes up his life and it plummets him back towards that dark path for awhile. You'll see him be a little darker and the comedy will still be there but as a character, he'll probably be a bit more grim about things."

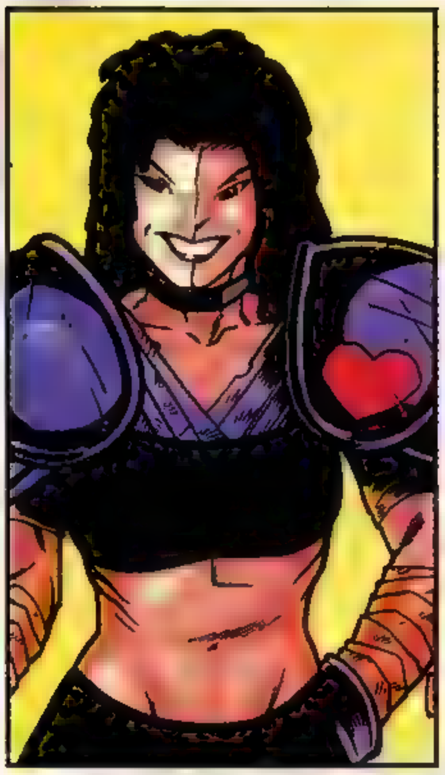
You know T-Ray won't be missing an opportunity like this to drop-kick his rival merc. In part one of the pivotal story, he decides it's time to put his master plan into action. All this time he's been watching and observing Deadpool and the duo finally butt heads with a "this town isn't big enough for the two of us" mentality.

"Deadpool knows he shouldn't go after him cause it's obviously a setup," declares Kelly, "and T-Ray is impressively strong so maybe now isn't the right time to get involved. However, Deadpool goes after him anyway."

Needless to say, the outcome won't be pretty. It's unfortunate Deadpool won't have anyone to lick his wounds as he alienates all his allies including the Irish love-of-his life, Siryn. "In the short term, he definitely screws things up with her," offers Kelly. "In the long term, she's not totally aware how far he sinks and exactly what depths of depression he takes on. It'll be interesting when they finally do meet up again."

Gee, do you get the feeling Deadpool must have royally peeved someone upstairs off? Ever since he was diagnosed with cancer, Wade Wilson has been as lucky as a camp counselor on Friday the 13th. Through an experiment, he beat the disease but the cure left him scarred from head to toe. Motivated to become more than a Baron Zemo runner-up, Wilson adopted the Deadpool persona. Lately, he's been rooming with a seeing-deprived, prisoner/confidant, golden girl named Blind Al, hanging with his best bud and arms supplier Weasel, and getting work from the 1-800-dial-a-merc headquarters aptly referred to as the Hellhouse. Still, much of DP's past remains a mystery including his time with the Canadian Weapon X program. All in all, this guy is a nutcase!

Jumping on the loony wagon with issue #14 is new regular penciler Walter McDaniel (SHADOWHAWK, KA-ZAR ANNUAL '97). With Deadpool's life trashed, now more than ever he needs a group hug and some moral support. Kelly said McDaniel's debut issue will focus on the merc and his friends at a coffee shop, sipping cappuccinos and latté while expressing their true feelings. Hey, that sounds almost like....JOE! WATCH OUT BEHIND YOU! WHACK! THUD! After knocking Kelly unconscious with a blow to the head, McDaniel delivered the goods on what's really going down. It seems our merc-for-hire is about to vent some frustrations on his pals! WHACK! KTHEHACKK! WHAM! Ummm, Walter, you can stop hitting Joe now, he was only joking and the spotlight is all yours.



"In issue #14, Deadpool locks Blind Al in this place called the Box which is a room where he keeps all these torture devices like chains and meat hooks, almost like Hellraiser," reveals McDaniel. "He also beats up Weasel and throws him in there."

With shards of broken glass all over the floor, lethal blades swinging back and forth and no lights, the two don't dare move. Instead, to pass the time, Blind Al tells old horror stories about their captor including why she never tries to escape. According to McDaniel, although fans won't get to see Deadpool until the last few pages, "You're learning about him through everybody else around him."

While this story may not incorporate the usual number of slapstick, happy-go-lucky elements, it is a perfect chance for McDaniel to strut his stuff. Not only does the New Yorker have a knack for the cartoony Deadpool and his amigo Widdle Wade, the artist can do a total U-turn if required.

"I have two different art styles," says McDaniel. "One is a pseudo manga style, almost like a Bernard Chang variation. And then there's my own stuff from the KA-ZAR ANNUAL '97 which has a more serious, darker edge."

Showing his enthusiasm to have McDaniel on board, a recovering Kelly gives him a hardy slap on the back and...out the window he sends Walter! Or was that a friendly shove? Where's editor Matt Idelson when you need him? At any rate, Kelly says, "I'm very excited to have Walter and I think it's gonna be great. I'm hoping for a little more stability and I think it'll reflect the changes we're making."

Besides all this touching bonding, the creative team has no intentions of slowing down the pace. Readers will get the nitty-gritty on Blind Al as they explore her warped relationship with Deadpool and the circumstances behind their unique "living arrangements." As for the other y-chromosome in his life, Typhoid Mary will be absent for the present but not forgotten. In fact, Kelly has something in mind for his favorite psychoette. Future guest appearances and villains who could also be popping up include Weapon X (Kane) and Vanessa, Sabretooth, Wolverine, Taskmaster, Deathlok and more Widdle Wade!

One story destined to hit readers below the belt revolves around some Canadian folks and the Weapon X program. It seems certain "participants" involved with the project are dropping like flies which eventually leads to...you guessed it! So what's their beef with him now? Apparently, the Canucks want to clean house. "Deadpool was kind of a reject so this guy is actually sent out to destroy all the mishaps," says McDaniel. "Deadpool is one of them."

The tale spills over into the next annual which is coincidentally his origin as well. It will answer those nagging questions of what happened during those Weapon X days. How did D.P. get his name? What is his relationship to the people from his past? And what are his connections to Sasquatch and Alpha Flight?

"There's a couple of surprises in there," promises Kelly. "And we're going to be talking about Deadpool post-discovering he has cancer leading up to the Deadpool present and discovering how he took those final steps in becoming a psychopath."

Not everyone views our lethal thespian in such harsh black and white terms though. Since issue #1, Landau, Luckman and Lake, a mysterious organization, has

demonstrated an interest in Deadpool. Despite initially brushing them off, he finally hooks up with them, but will his new darker image be what L, L & L had expected?

"Zoe's pretty convinced he's an intricate part of something which had been predicted and they're hoping to breed him into a heroic figure," says Kelly. "So part of Landau, Luckman and Lake's contract is to start him down that path. Obviously it's going to be a lot tougher for them than they bargained for."

Now Kelly and McDaniel may be the cool groove masters of the macabre merc but never let it be said that Marvel VISION isn't daring. Ssooooo after administering sedatives, Prozac, an electrical shock or twenty, and everything else under the kitchen sink to Deadpool, I went one-on-one with the big man himself.

MV: *What do you see in Typhoid Mary?*

DP: Beyond her obvious assets, ahem, I see a twisted, speed metal-thrill-kill-chick who is more of a pain in my butt than anything else. She's a couple of fries short of a Happy Meal. I wouldn't say we have a deep relationship.

MV: *Isn't Siryn a little bit of a goody-two-shoes for you?*

DP: Yeah, but I'm hoping to scrape all that good stuff away and get to the nasty center of the Tootsie Pop if that's all possible.

MV: *What do you think of Landau, Luckman and Lake?*

DP: Besides the fact they sound like a folk group from the '60s, I guess they're not half bad for people who spend all days in suits.

MV: *When it comes down to you and T-Ray, how are you gonna take him down for the count?*

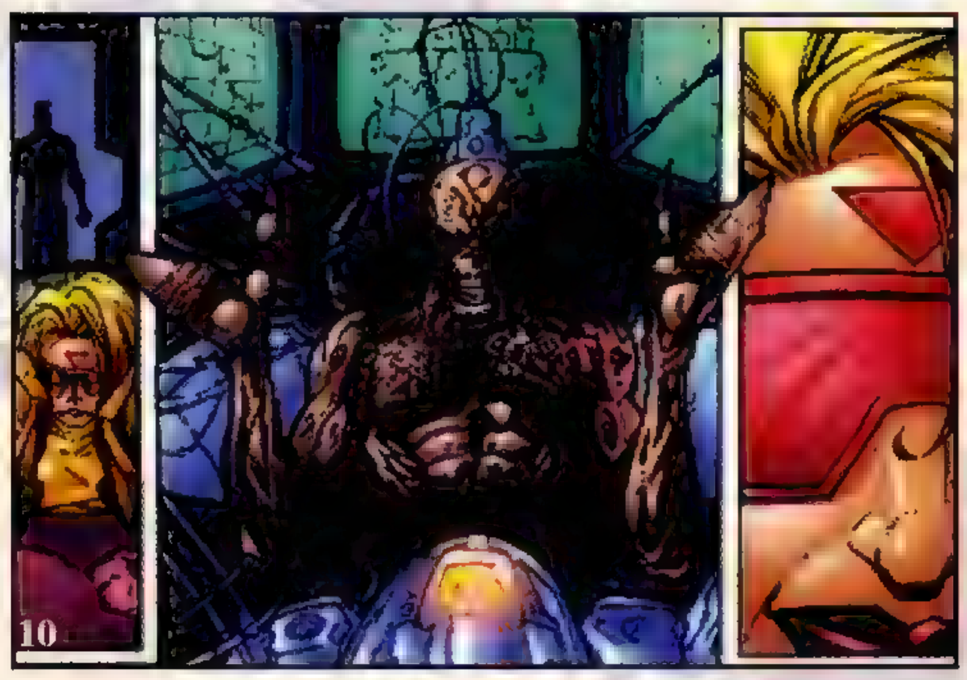
DP: Well, I'll probably start with the atomic wedgie and work my way down to a nuclear noogie. But I guarantee whatever I do, I'll embarrass the crap out of the albino poster child for Euthanasia.

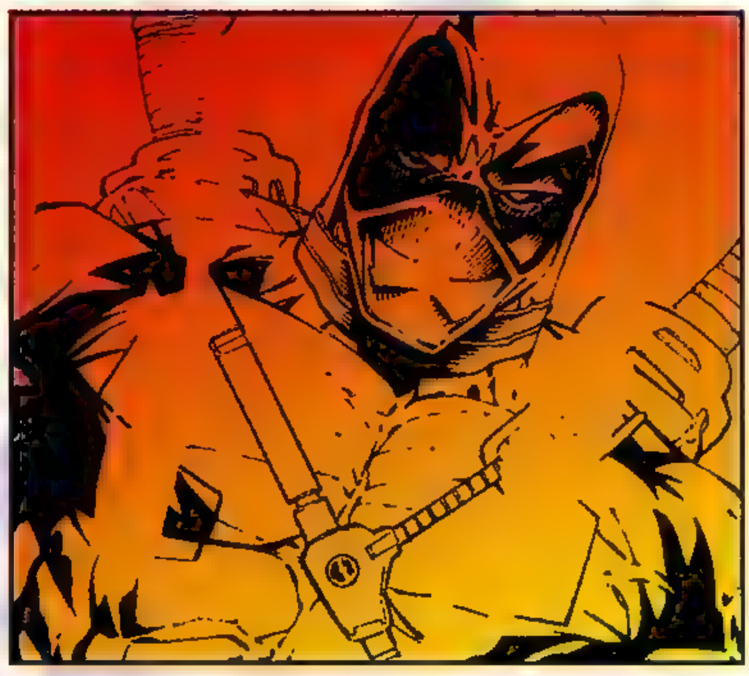
MV: *Finally, why should fans pick up your adventures?*

DP: Cause there's no "X" in the title of my book. (Both break out laughing)

Okay, it's not that funny. Deadpool? Why do you keep laughing? What's that, Joe? It might be 'cause he has a substantial healing factor similar to Wolverine which helps him metabolize foreign substances like.....oh no! The drugs! The poisons! Fiddlesticks! I just assumed all his hokey Hong Kong Fooey and Highlander moves were his superpowers, not due to natural fighting sessions. Err, Deadpool, ...pal of mine! Tim Tuohy made me do it, I swear, visit him instead! Hey, I don't like the way those beady blank white peepers of yours just popped open! Put that blade down, I'm warning ya! Okay, I'm outta here, like yesterday! Oh, and buy DEADPOOL, it's to die for!

— Bryan Cairns





a conversation with tom peyer

One of my teachers in school would profoundly say to us, "Always give your best because you never know who's watching." This small piece of advice has definitely held true for Tom Peyer. His hard work and persistence paid off enough to get him noticed by a true professional, who eventually became his mentor. He now writes two recently launched titles for Marvel (MARVEL TEAM-UP and QUICKSILVER) plus one monthly each for DC and Acclaim.

Dean: Let's talk about the early part of your career. Somebody told me you used to do a newspaper strip?
Tom: Yeah, I did a weekly political comic strip in the Syracuse New Times, which was a paper in my hometown of Syracuse, NY. I also wrote another local strip for awhile called "Captain 'Cuse," created by cartoonist Joe Orsak. The Captain was a kind of Marvel-style super hero set in Syracuse. One of my readers turned out to be the great writer, Roger Stern.. At one point he was overbooked and thought I could give him a hand. That was about ten years ago and it really opened the door for me.

Dean: How did you assist him?
Tom: I would do a middle story draft. He'd start something and I'd hammer away at it for awhile and he'd refine it as the last draft. It was great because I was learning so much working that closely to him. He's such a nice guy, and he felt so guilty about our arrangement, even though it was a great break for me; he was always trying to line up work with my actual name on it.

Dean: What were some of the titles that you helped draft?
Tom: It was some of the Superman two-pagers in ACTION COMICS WEEKLY. During the latter part of the POWER OF THE ATOM series he ended up arranging for me to take over the series from him, thus revealing my existence to the world as his secret emergency weapon. When I was working with Roger, Mike Carlin was the editor. He was extremely open and kind when I'd call him up and run story ideas past him even though he was incredibly busy and didn't really know me that well. That's not to say that people should call Mike! (both laugh) Don't!

Dean: Now, with all those phone calls, did Mike get to know you?
Tom: He sure did...As a matter of fact, it was Mike who recommended me for a staff job at DC. I became Karen Berger's Assistant Editor, which was the rest of my education. I learned a tremendous amount from her; she's one of the truly brilliant editors.

Dean: What was the best excuse you ever heard for a late deadline?
Tom: (laughter) I knew a guy who'd make up fake Fed Ex air bill numbers. People would call him and he'd say, "Aw, I sent the package, here's the air bill number: 54298"...or whatever. They'd call Fed Ex for a trace and there'd be no such package. (both laughing) That was the most desperate one I remember.

Dean: What was the timeline when you worked at DC?
Tom: I went on staff in 1990. Karen and I worked on Swamp Thing, Sandman, Hellblazer, Wonder Woman, and Shade the Changing Man. I hung around just long enough for the launch of the Vertigo line. I left that job in 1993 to go freelance.

Dean: So you hopped over the fence to the freelance side of town!
Tom: I guess I did...The first monthly I worked on as a freelancer was L.E.G.I.O.N. '93. I owe that job to editor Dan Raspler and writer Mark Waid, who was my predecessor on the title. Mark has helped me *greatly...he's a good friend.*

Dean: What was the first thing you did for Marvel?
Tom: It was X-NATION 2099. That was the last launch of a 2099 book and it didn't last long. I also wrote

a couple of issues of DOOM 2099. I didn't work for Marvel again for about a year...or was it two? However long it was, Mark Bernardo eventually called and offered me an Amalgam book with Barry Kitson. I did MAGNETO AND THE METAL MEN. That led to working on QUICKSILVER.

Dean: Since you conveniently just brought him up...let's chat a bit about "The White-Haired One." Quicksilver always seemed to me that he preferred to work alone. You now have him leading the Knights of Wundagore.
Tom: When I was asked to submit a proposal, they wanted a series with Quicksilver and the Knights, which, despite the way it sounds, made sense to me immediately. It would be smart for mutated beings to get together and help each other in the cruel world, even if their mutations are of a radically different order.

Dean: Is Quicksilver going to be his same old temperamental self?
Tom: I think it's about time that he grew up a little.

Dean: And you're going to be his teacher in Maturity 101?
Tom: (laughter) Well, I'll try...ya know Captain America tried. Maybe I could do a better job than Captain America, but I doubt it (both laugh). It's funny you should bring up his moodiness. My initial reaction was not to take the job on Quicksilver. "Who'd want to write that jerk?" was my basic response. In thinking about him more...it does make him more interesting, doesn't it? To put a character who has problems with people in the middle of a bunch of people, especially guys in animal suits, is a lot more entertaining than everyone holding hands and getting along.

Now in contrast to what I just said, I think I may be surprising a few readers. By looking at his history and thinking where I really want to go with him, I decided I want him to be happy. We're going to see things working out and going smoother for him more than they have in the past. That's not to say that we won't have drama and adventures and all that stuff. I think despite himself, he's going to become a little better adjusted. I like to envision that he's entering into a period of his life that he'll probably look back on as some of his happiest times. I can't say how long it will last, but we'll play with it awhile...Quicksilver's been through the mill!

Dean: Now a real hard-hitting CNN type question...Will Quicksilver get a new haircut? Those two curls on his bangs are so retro, don'tcha think?
Tom: Ha, ha...It's hard when you have a cowlick and you run around all the time...it's kinda difficult to control. We are giving him a headset, which isn't the sentence you probably expected me to say. He uses it to narrate the stories in the form of letters to his vanished wife, Crystal. It's a good way to really get into his feelings. I heard George Perez is using the headset on an upcoming Avengers cover. He made a terrific point by saying that if you are running faster than the speed of sound, you should wear a headset to communicate with your teammates. This is the big change in Quicksilver, folks...he has a headset.

Dean: Is the Wundagore team sticking around for awhile?
Tom: For now the Knights of Wundagore will be the status quo. Quicksilver is the boss of a bunch of animal guys. He's got his daughter with him and all the animal guys love his daughter. They all live in a castle on the Hudson River and he's promised the High Evolutionary that he'll look after them in man's world.

Dean: Is there a real castle on the Hudson that serves as a model?
Tom: I used to take the train that rode along the Hudson quite a bit and I would see this old castle on a rock in the middle. I don't know its story, but I thought it would fit.

Dean: Now watch, readers, as we segue out of one topic and into another as smooth as glass...Are you planning any Quicksilver appearances in MARVEL TEAM-UP?
Tom: (laughter) I can't say what issue, but I think it's inevitable since I won't have to do any homework on the character.

Dean: Have you done any Spidey stuff before?
Tom: Mark Waid and I wrote the first issue of MTU's immediate predecessor, SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP, which involved Spidey and the X-Men. I think it came out about a year and a half ago. I also did a story for the MARVEL VALENTINE'S SPECIAL.

Dean: Did Tom Brevoort like your previous Spidey work or was it something else you wrote that landed you TEAM-UP?
Tom: (Pause)...You know, I don't really know. You'd have to ask him why he chose me...I'm sure he asks himself that question every now and then. (both laugh)

Dean: How is this TEAM-UP series going to be different from the previous one?
Tom: This book will be quite different. We're only featuring Spider-Man for six months, then Sub-Mariner for six months, then somebody else, and so on.

Dean: That's pretty cool! How did this come about?
Tom: *Well, it was a creative decision; they didn't want Spider-Man in too many titles each month. It worked out well for me. In the case of Namor, there's no monthly book to agree with or an editorial team looking over our shoulder.*

Instead of having stand-alone stories with just a guest appearance, we can see it as a limited series with a whole bunch of co-stars assisting the main character. Tom Brevoort and Glenn Greenberg have been great in trying to get me the characters I want. I thought they'd have marketing men who would tell me who to use, but it hasn't been that way at all.

Dean: Speaking of marketing tactics, did you ever order anything out of a comic book like X-Ray Specs or Black Pepper Gum?
Tom: No, but I was probably the last kid in the world to join The Supermen of America. It was a fan club that started in the forties and ended in the sixties. The day the package arrived, I strutted around the neighborhood proudly showing off my membership button that featured a Joe Shuster drawing. Some kid said, "Wow, that's a great button. Can I see it?" Now there was some wet tar on the road because they just repaved it, and he dipped it in the tar. (both laughing) So that's my experience of being a Superman of America. It's probably all for the best because the name sounds really fascist. (both laugh)

Dean: Okay, last question...Your stories are interjected with some very clever humor...
Tom: Why, thank you...

Dean: You're welcome...So which is more likely to make you laugh: the Three Stooges or Monty Python?
Tom: "Touched by an Angel."

— Dean Davis

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IN THIS ISSUE
Find out more about the former Avengers leader, the Black Widow, with our special in depth coverage
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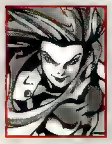


January 10, 1998 — New York's Finest Daily Newspaper — Fifty Cents

CAPTAIN AMERICA DEFEATS TERRORISTS

Joe Nosas -UPI

It was a nightmare come true as terrorists descended upon the nation's capital, taking over the Smithsonian Institute. Captain America arrived to defuse the takeover, but the threat was left open that the terrorist organization known as Hydra may return in the near future.

Thousands of tourists were evacuated from the historic museum which houses some of the greatest artifacts from our history. The Hydra terrorists, who have long sought world domination through high-tech means, issued a statement demanding the arrival of Captain America, who reportedly thwarted a Navy Sub hijacking by Hydra last week. Upon arriving at the scene, Captain America, who recently returned from Japan after being believed dead for nearly a year, bravely entered the museum alone. As police and national guardsmen waited tensely outside, numerous gunshots were fired and small explosions were heard.

Finally, the patriotic Avenger emerged from the museum, nursing a gunshot wound to his shoulder. As he stepped out, hundreds of armed law-enforcement officials swarmed into the building, capturing numerous unconscious Hydra agents, and apparently bringing the threat to a close.

After having his shoulder tended to, Captain America stood before the assembled throng of media members and declared a personal war on Hydra, who he blamed for countless deaths and numerous other injustices. In a stunning moment atypical of his character, Captain America vowed to wipe out the Hydra organization once and for all, prompting mass speculation that the Avengers might be called upon for a raid of invasion proportions.

—Continued in CAPTAIN AMERICA #3

Staff Photo Chuck Giambalvo

MILITIA GROUP HOLDS UP BANK— WIDOW INTERVENES

Joe Sidesaddle -BUGLE

A well-armed militia group calling themselves FreedomsLight held up a midtown bank and sent terror through the patrons around lunchtime. The militia team's purported attempt to steal millions of dollars with which to purchase weapons and expand their operation was broken up by the timely intervention of former Avengers leader, the Black Widow.

The Widow, who has kept a low profile since the Avengers' battle with Onslaught in Central Park last year, could not have timed her reemergence better. The militia group struck during the lunch hour, and were quickly discovered by bank security while emptying out the vault. Even as official police vehicles surrounded the bank, a member of FreedomsLight grabbed a hostage and threatened to kill her and everyone else in the bank if the police made any overtly threatening moves.

The heretofore unheard of Freedoms Light group took advantage of the lull to lay out their militant agenda. Having found the democratic system of government too large and unwieldy to be accountable for its actions, FreedomsLight was organized to bring the government to its knees. In a prepared statement, one of its members explained that their hope is to lead a citizens' insurrection, leading to the creation of a new government, one that would be responsible to its people. The group claimed to be following the leadership of a woman named Ebon Flame. At the time this article went to press, neither local authorities nor the F.B.I. had any criminal record for an Ebon Flame. A check of national phone directories turned up nothing, and authorities were beginning a search of birth certificates and I.R.S. returns to try and find out who and where Ebon Flame might be.

The standoff came to a dramatic close when the Black Widow, who somehow infiltrated the bank undetected, broke up the hostage impasse. The insurrectionists fled the scene, escaping both the Widow and the police.

This is the first time that a militia group has struck on the East Coast. Most militia activity in this country has been contained to the Midwest. The Mayor refused to speculate on whether this signaled the beginning of a new militia movement on the East Coast, or if this might be an isolated incident. Either way, said the mayor, terrorist activities are wrong, and he vowed the city would do everything in its power to bring the members of FreedomsLight to justice.

—Continued in JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #518

J. Jonah Jameson

WHEN IT'S TIME TO DRAW THE LINE

For years, I have bent the rule of journalistic objectivity to try and educate the public about a dangerous menace. That menace is, of course, Spider-Man. To the world at large he has been, at worst, some kind of renegade hero; a vigilante who has decided he can do more than those that have followed the laws of the country. To those people, he has been part James Dean, part Rambo. And there are the people who celebrate him as some kind of colorful figure, like a Santa Claus for the innocent, bringing justice and safety to those who need both.

In truth, Spider-Man is neither. He is a menace. He and he alone decides who he'll protect and who he'll allow to be harmed by the seamier side of the world. Only Spider-Man decides for Spider-Man what laws are okay to break, what rules that govern society he may disregard when it serves his need. Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Spider-Man has been corrupted by the power at his disposal, the power that has been enhanced by those who would look the other way and let him break the law at his whim. Until now.

Recently, my good friend and co-publisher, Norman Osborn was brutally attacked by Spider-Man for no apparent reason. This senseless beating comes on the heels of the discovery of a homeless man who died at Spider-Man's hands. Apparently, the Bugle's ongoing investigation into the matter must have made Spider-Man nervous. Perhaps our proud investigative staff discovered something that would clearly and legally link him to the crime. And so, in the grand tradition of the Kingpin or Al Capone, Spider-Man roughed up the co-publisher of this paper. It could have been me. It could have been anyone who is employed by the Bugle. Spider-Man thought that he could just circumvent the law and hide the truth from those who have championed it. He was mistaken.

Today, we have taken out a full-page ad in our own paper, offering a reward for the capture of Spider-Man. Whereas the police and the mayor's office seem to think Spider-Man adds some color and personality to our city, the Bugle is taking a stand. A man was murdered. Another was beaten senseless. We're not going to live in fear of Spider-Man anymore. We're not going to lay down and accept this miscarriage of justice. Spider-Man has proven conclusively that he is a villain in the truest sense of the word. Now it's time for him to be brought to justice for his crimes. And so he shall.

—Continued in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #255

That Healthy Glow

Radiation in the Marvel Universe

Radiation is a funny thing. It can create medical miracles at a [illegible] while a guy [illegible] a convenience store down the street uses it to cook his burrito. It can bring an end to a world war while also esta[illegible]ntif[illegible] basis to create a cast of super heroes that revolutionized comics. Since we don't know squat about medical technology and probably none of you are interested in microwave cook[illegible] [illegible]ll s[illegible]ck to analyzing the super hero part. This does, in a roundabout way, tie in with the dropping of the atomic bomb that ended WWII.

An Explosive Beginning

The bombing of Hiroshima thrust the world into the atomic age. A few years later we bec[illegible]e fa[illegible] with the term "The Cold War". To fully understand [illegible]ow [illegible] Stan Lee changed the comic book industry, we must first explore the feelings of that time. After the war, Ameri[illegible] were [illegible] the bomb and anything that had to do with Communism and radioactivity. In 1950, Marvel introduced their only new [illegible] decade, Marvel Boy. His story involved Communist space aliens and achieving victory by nukin' his enemies. Unfortunately for Marvel Boy the public wasn't ready to see the nuclear [illegible] as entertainment. The title was canceled after two issues.

Towards the end of the 1950s though, Hollywood b[illegible] to cash in on nuclear science. They gave us movies like: [illegible] Amazing Colossal Man, The Incredible Shrinking Man, [illegible] Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman. All of these characters [illegible] affected by the then unknown evils of radioactivity. There was also a truckload of irradiated insects that tromped through small town America. Do we really have to mention Godzilla and every other atomic-related monster that decided to do their morning workout on Tokyo.

Speaking of monsters...it was around this time that radioactive plotlines started to prominently appear in comics. Nearly all of them were in the science fiction titles. Jack Kirby drew stories that featured creatures similar to Godzilla and his buds. Space aliens (who used to threaten Earth with "death rays") were now sporting sleek, atomic-based weapons. Still, there were no popular heroes that had their origin centered around a radioactive accident. Readers would have to wait until 1961 for that to happen.

Those Cool and Crazy Cosmic Rays

One day Stan Lee was called into publisher Martin Goodman's office for a meeting. They discussed the success of DC's Justice League of America and came to the conclusion that it was time for Marvel to introduce a team book. The end result was of course the Fantastic Four. Their debut issue was cover-dated November 1961. They were the first in a string of Marvel successes that gained their powers through exposure to radioactivity.

Not wanting to lose out to the Russians in the race for a manned space flight, Dr. Reed Richards envisioned his project to be the first. He meets with his pilot Ben Grimm, his girlfriend Sue Storm, and her brother Johnny. Reed tells them of his plan for an early launch. They sneak onto the base where they soon take off.

However, the ship's shielding isn't strong enough and cosmic rays flood the cabin.

Now we're all familiar with the powers each gained from the radiation shower, but did you know that those powers were based on the four basic elements of nature? Reed represented water, Sue was air, Johnny was fire, and Ben was earth.

The group moved into the Baxter Building where Reed would conduct many an experiment linked to radioactivity. Meanwhile across town, there lived a high school student who was also fascinated by atomic science. On one fateful night, he too attended a science demonstration that would change his life.

With Great Power...

Peter Parker's idea of a hot date was asking a raven-haired beauty named Sally to attend an exhibit with him at the science hall. For the "umpteenth time" she tells him no and he goes to the demonstration alone. As he watches the experiment, a spider gets zapped by the radioactive energy bolt and bites poor Peter with its dying breath. We then find ourselves in one of the greatest origin stories ever told.

Blind Justice

Whereas the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, and the Hulk (we'll visit him next) all had careers or interests in science, Daredevil did not. Matt Murdock was just trying to help a blind man cross the street when radioactivity entered his life. Okay, so maybe the helping across the street part was more like pushing the guy out of the way of a speeding truck that had bad brakes. After screeching to a halt, the back door of the truck flings open, allowing a vial of radioactive material to fall out. (Get it?...radioactive?...fall out?) Unfortunately, Matt's face gets in the way. As a result, he is permanently blinded. On the upside, his remaining senses and reflexes are accelerated to a superhuman scale. With the help of Stick, Matt hones his skills to become a major player in the hero biz.

The Gamma Quadrant

Between the first appearances of the FF and Spidey, a gamma bomb test was scheduled in the desert. The project's brilliant scientist, Dr. Bruce Banner, was caught in the blast as he saved the mischie[illegible] Jones, who had wandered onto the test sight on a dare. The Hulk was born and he's been [illegible] his way through Marvel books ever since.

An interesting note to the Hulk mythos is the number of green gamma co-stars that appear from time to time. Let's see...we have Doc Samson, a noted psychiatrist who exposed himself to gamma rays after helping Betty Ross and the Hulk. His skin tone is normal, but his strength is determined by the length of his flowing green hair. Jennifer Walters is Bruce's cousin whose day job was a lawyer. After she was shot by the enemy of a client, Bruce gave

her a transfusion of his blood which turned her into She-Hulk. Her skin and hair are green, she has great strength along with her wits, and is blessed with one of the best buffed bods in comic books today. Samuel Stern worked at a government research facility. After being exposed to gamma waste, his head grew to the size of a beach ball. Since a little bit of power usually goes straight to one's head, he dubbed himself the Leader. His mental abilities are off the scales and he can shoot psi-bolts from his head. He also has the capability to control puny human minds. Emil Blonsky was a spy who was a little too curious with one of Banner's machines. He exposed himself to the gamma rays and became the Abomination. He now basically looks like the Creature from the Black Lagoon on steroids.

They're Watching You...

A race of Marvel's most powerful characters owe their physical and philosophical attributes to radioactive science. The Watchers' original plan was to pass on their vast knowledge to primitive planets throughout the universe. They bathed themselves in "delta rays" for eternal life. They absorbed anti-matter isotopes which allowed them to travel through space and time at will.

Their first goodwill mission brought them to the planet Prosilicus. They bestowed upon the culture the gift of unlimited atomic energy. The Prosilicans were not ready for such a quick advancement, but who's going to turn down the ability to be the strongest planet in the galaxy? They soon launch a nuclear strike on their planetary neighbors. Both worlds are annihilated. The Watchers felt great remorse and guilt for their actions and vowed never to interfere again.

The Cap Controversy

When Captain America's origin was first told, he was just injected with the Super Serum. However, when Stan Lee and Jack Kirby rewrote the tale in CAPTAIN AMERICA #109, they had him zapped with "Vita-rays" after the initial shot was given. It was never revealed if these vita-rays were radioactive or just another type of energy invented by Professor Reinstein.

A New Pair of Genes

You're probably saying to yourself about now, "Hey, Chucklehead...what about the X-Men?" We can safely say that atomic experimentation can account for more than a few of the X-characters. They were born with their DNA evolved to higher levels as a result of their parents' exposure to some form of radioactivity. Hank McCoy, the Beast, is a prime example of this theory. How many others share a similar experience is undetermined at this time.

An Irradiating Conclusion

We've seen that a core of Marvel's most enduring characters have gained their strengths and/or weaknesses from exposure to various forms of radioactivity. These sciences are now a part of our everyday lives as opposed to fifty years ago when they were seen as the eve of our destruction.

Two quotes seem to sum up this piece pretty well...

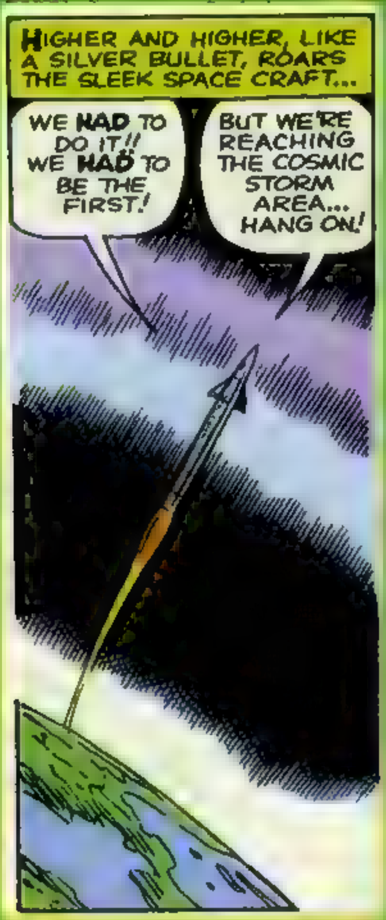
"As long as we're experimenting with radioactivity, there's no telling what may happen, or how much our advancements in science may cost us."

- Jack "King" Kirby

"I've irradiated thousands of bugs over the years in the lab. Some of them lived, most of them died, but I never saw one of them shoot lasers from his eyes."

–An anonymous nuclear science researcher

Dean Davis would like to thank Bill Broomall whose resources and knowledge were invaluable to this article.



MARVEL'S UNSUNG HEROES

Showcasing the extraordinary individuals who have helped the House of Ideas stay three car lengths ahead of the pack... it's Marvel's Unsung Heroes.

Real Name: Lovern Kindzierski

Occupation: Owner/President Digital Chameleon (currently coloring DR. STRANGE SPECIAL, INCREDIBLE HULK, and SFX rendering for CAPTAIN AMERICA and AVENGERS)

Date of Birth: 7/29/54

First Appeared in the Marvel Universe: Painting blue lines on THE AGENT Graphic Novel

Dual Identities: Writer

Known Confidants: The Chameleon Crew: Rick, Jen, Dan, Igor, Matthew, and Jess

Major Enemies: Bad drivers and pretty much anyone else on the road outside of himself

Hero Status Verification: Has been contributing to Marvel Comics on and off for the last 10 years

How did you break into the business?

I was on my way to pay my rent when I bumped into George Freeman who was working on a book called ELRIC: SAILOR ON THE SEA OF FATE at the time. Luckily enough for me, his [illegible] had just quit and he asked me if I was [illegible]. At the time, I was [illegible] and had taken a number of painting courses so I had the background for it. And that was it. I basically stepped right from the [illegible]

How did Digital Chameleon come about?

[illegible] guides and do a really nice job, but the pages would come back and I'd be like, "Hey! I had a [illegible]" It was very frustrating. Then, when [illegible] that Steve Olliffe was doing his own [illegible]ons on computer, I went out and [illegible] my own method using a Macintosh.

What exactly does your job entail?

[illegible] direction. Then there is myself and Igor who work [illegible] on the creative side with the artists who do [illegible] guides, and then most importantly [illegible] painters.

Is it tough living in Canada and working for a company based in the US?

Not at all. [illegible] wonderful things about this industry: distance makes no difference at all.

What's the main difference between coloring covers as opposed to interiors?

What it comes down to is the fact that [illegible] certain amount of time for each [illegible] time to do a cover. It [illegible] than the interior.

Is it okay to wear a brown belt with black pants?

Sure. The trick is to also be wearing brown shoes at the same time.

Do you work from exact reference points for every recurring element of the Marvel Universe? For example, are Betty Banner's eyes the same shade of blue every month?

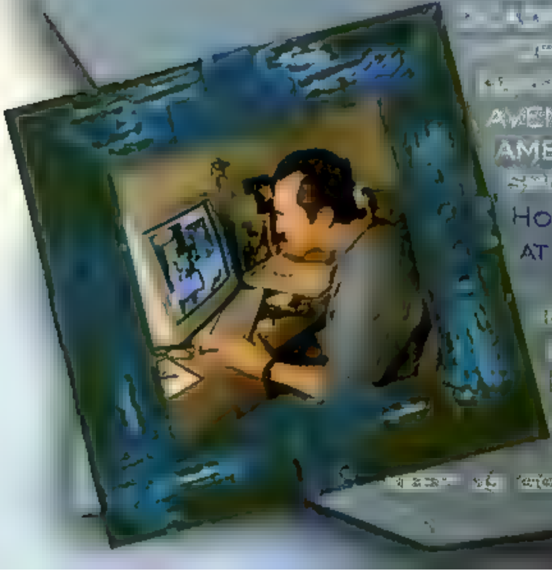
[illegible] electronic pallets for [illegible] the pallet for #460 [illegible] and update where needed. Other than that, everything stays exactly the same.

What's the secret to creating mood with color?

Working with the writer as well as the [illegible]. At Digital Chameleon we always go over the scripts for the books we're working on [illegible] keep in touch with what the creators want the pages to look like.

What books has Digital Chameleon worked on?

[illegible] Avengers, Captain America, and some Spider-Man stuff too.



How many people work at Digital C.?

Thirty-seven, including executives like the Operations Manager and Production Manager who help keep us going in the right

What's the coolest thing Digital Chameleon is involved in at the moment?

Right now we're doing something different with Chris Bachalo's pages for UNCANNY X-MEN #'s 348 and 349. We're working solely from his pencils; there is no inking involved. That way, what you see is exactly what Chris drew.

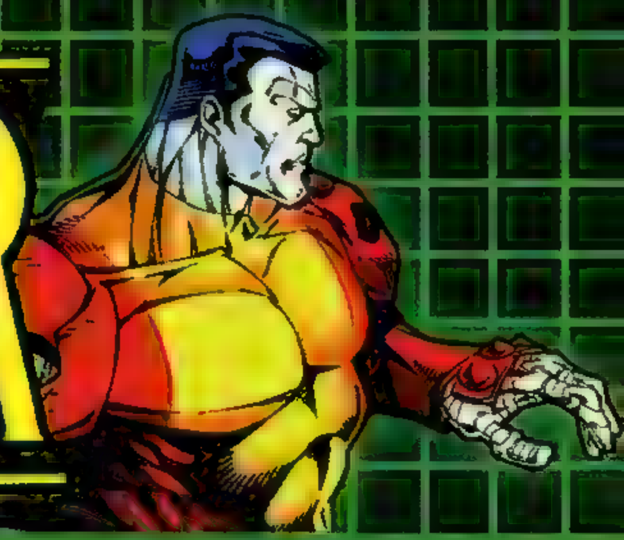
Who are some of your heroes?

Gil Kane, Jim Steranko, Frank Miller, and Bill Sienkiewicz.

— Robert Piotrowski

CALAVERA/SKULL

EXCALIBUR



Admit it, you know what the best part of going to the movies is. It's not for the fluffy buttery popcorn nor for the big screen experience and it's not bringing your date and cuddling in the back row. You paid mucho dinero for the upcoming trailers! That's right! People are dying to get the latest inside scoop on what's ahead! Well here at Marvel, we aim to please.

If you think EXCALIBUR writer Ben Raab has already put that merry mutant band through the wash-and-spin cycle with Crimson Dawn, Ogun, Spiral, Arcade and Black Air, think again! Through the time-honored traditions of intimidation and torture (and slipping a $10 bill didn't hurt either), Raab disclosed some of his hush-hush plans for the rest of 1997 and the beginning of 1998. He's about to rock their world with new members, a heap of evil nasties and a side order of heartache. Grab your Goobers as Marvel VISION proudly presents tonight's feature sneak presentation: *Excalibur, An American X-Team in London.*

"Excalibur shares Xavier's dreams but I think they go about it differently," points out Raab about their (the team's) role in the world. "And for different reasons than their stateside cousins, they've carried on."

Two of the team's distinct philosophies recently became the focus of issue #116. A flashback to the early days when Kitty "Shadowcat" Pryde and Kurt "Nightcrawler" Wagner were part of the X-Men, it takes place between UNCANNY #166 and #167 when, on their journey home after defeating the Brood in outer space, the X-Men and Starjammers come across a Sidri ship lying virtually dead. The Sidri, a race of bounty hunters, have battled the X-Men before and the question arises whether they should now help them. Ultimately, Corsair, the Starjammers' leader and Cyclops' father, decides to let them rot because of their history and killer instincts.

"This doesn't sit too well with Kitty and Nightcrawler," informs Raab. "They slip away into the Starjammers' med lab and while going through their stuff, Kitty finds what she thinks could be a revitalization drug. She ejects it from the ship and it gets injected into the Sidri ship; then the Starjammers go to warp speed and they're gone."

So what does this untold tale have to do with Excalibur? While most readers may have assumed Nightcrawler is off searching for his lost sorceress love Amanda Sefton, it seems Black Air has handed the swashbuckling teleporter over to a revamped Sidri.

"It turns out that the drug is a mutation virus," reveals Raab. "When the Sidri returned home, they were exiled because they had been changed and tainted. Now they've come to Earth seeking revenge."

Once Excalibur discovers Nightcrawler's plight, Colossus rallies the troops together for an all-out battle with the alien invaders which takes readers to the end of December. For those who might've missed some of the last 114 issues, all the mayhem, adventure and rescue missions have become an Excalibur trademark.

Originally, Nightcrawler, Shadowcat, Meggan and Brian "Captain Britain" Braddock saved damsel-in-distress Rachel "Phoenix" Summers from the combined menace of the Technet and the Warwolves. Under Captain Britain's leadership, the quintet has since had its fair share of trials, tribulations and loss. Yet through the rainy days, they somehow endured. Now with two of the founders currently out of the picture, who does Raab consider the heart and soul of this family?

"Nightcrawler is the heart of the team in the way he's the one who pumps the life into them. It's his jocular nature, the levity he brings. They've seen a lot of stuff and have every reason to be grim, gritty and dark, feared and hated. He keeps them light and provides their life blood by virtue of who he is."

That leaves Kitty and Meggan for the soul but in actuality, Raab believes that distinction belongs to a new member who has gone through some hardships in the past. "At least the direction that I'm heading in, Colossus is the soul of the team. He's the artist, the dreamer in some ways and I think that is what is going to keep them together."

The team sure is gonna need a lot of that loving Russian for what's in store for them. To start the new year off with a big bang, Excalibur will finally discover who or what has been terrorizing Kitty's pet dragon Lockheed. While Raab didn't want to disclose the attackers' identities (even another $10 didn't help), he did hint that they have something to do with Kitty and Kurt. However, he did let slip that the mastermind behind all the trouble is the dream dimension's own Nightmare, who is basically testing the team's mettle. According to Raab, what follows is "a psychological issue with Nightmare where we get to see some of Excalibur's deepest, darkest fears come out."

While nothing is set in stone after the Nightmare arc, Raab divulged his X-mas wish list of plot ideas, including a new lease on life for Excalibur. Not only does he want to tie them closer to X-continuity, but to other corners of the Marvel Universe as well.

"I want to make them the hub of the Mutant Underground which is the network of humans and mutants working together to promote power and harmony between the species," says Raab. "Xavier's dream in action. We saw in 'Zero Tolerance' that one of the most important things compromised was the database of Xavier's underground. My take is that while Xavier is gone, Nightcrawler is going to take this over."

Part of the blue fuzzy elf's decision is due to a weird vision he had while in Nightmare's realm. As a result, Nightcrawler will become even sneakier and double-dealing in his ways. For instance, to keep tabs on the Friends of Humanity, Excalibur will plant a human representative in their midst. This spy, named Chevalier, will leak that Sebastian Shaw is a mutant, thus manipulating the Friends of Humanity against the Hellfire Club.

"I want Excalibur to be more proactive and to start pitting their enemies against each other," explains Raab. "That makes for good strategy and that's something we rarely ever see. They tend to be reactive, but in this case, they're being a little bit underhanded to achieve a greater goal."

Other threats to rear their ugly heads during the changing seasons are the Crazy Gang, Belasco and Amanda's mother. And gearing up for issue #125, Excalibur will face some of the X-Men's deadliest foes. "It only makes sense that the international team faces the greatest international threat—the Hellfire Club," reasons Raab.

The X-scriber is also hoping to mess around with the cast and headquarters. Following events in the KITTY PRYDE: AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. limited series, Kitty and Pete Wisdom will call their relationship kaput. Consequently, Wisdom will leave the team to be a loner again. Excalibur will be leaving Muir Island and moving into a Braddock-funded townhouse in London, and because Rahne "Wolfsbane" Sinclair's stepmother Moira has been quarantined due to the Legacy Virus, the young mutant will opt to stay behind as well.

Not to worry though 'cause two possible replacements with an international flavor will be Sabra and Spitfire. Sabra, who was recently seen in "Zero Tolerance," initially hooks up with the team because "something is going on in Israel and it looks like Legion has returned," explains Raab. "Excalibur goes there to investigate and discovers the three personalities that were inside Legion have come to life and are wreaking havoc."

The suppressed characters were Jack, a tele-

kinetic; Cyndi, a pyrotic; and Jemail, a telepath. Somehow, they were miraculously released from Legion's subconscious when he died. After all that commotion, Sabra, who helped the underground recently in X-Men, decides to join Excalibur's cause.

Another possible candidate for membership will be Jacqueline Falsworth, a.k.a. Spitfire from the Invaders, a speedster who has been around for a long time. Raised in a rich, upper class British family, she already knows Brian Braddock from social circles. In NAMOR #12, a senior-aged Spitfire was given another transfusion from the android Human Torch which reverted her back into her 20s. Now something is amiss and Spitfire needs the TLC of an X-specialist.

So we've covered the game plan and the new blood but what about the remaining characters? They deserve equal time too! Looking into his crystal ball, Raab enthusiastically gave some of the ins and outs of his stable's future.

COLOSSUS "I want to really establish him as the soul of the team. He's the mainstay, he's the rock, the one that fights until the fight is over. If I can bring Sabra in, I really want to establish a relationship between the two of them, have her be the first woman he's fallen in love with since Kitty."

MEGGAN "It's dealing with Brian possibly coming back, it's getting ready for her wedding. It's just a lot of fun stuff with her. All she ever wanted is about to come true. And little does she realize it's all a lie."

SHADOWCAT "Is gonna start college after she breaks up with Wisdom. And the weird thing is I want one of her professors to probably be Pete's sister (from the Pryde and Wisdom limited series). I want her to be a professor of alternative anthropology. The rest is to have Kitty be in school, show her as a teenager with conflicts with kids her own age."

NIGHTCRAWLER "It's the search for Xavier, it's taking control of the underground. For him, it's a very personal thing—why aren't the X-Men going after Charles, someone has to and who better to do it than him? He's sort of immersing himself in his work because his girlfriend and mentor are missing."

DOUGLOCK "Still a little bit of a friendship with Rahne even though she won't be in the book that often. Doug in a lot of ways is like the lens the reader is going to see the characters through. He's the outsider looking in."

CAPTAIN BRITAIN "He's learned he's Captain Britain super hero and Brian Braddock scientist. To be a true hero, he must be whoever he needs to be given a certain situation."

There you have it, Marvelites. The heroes! The villains! The glamor and glitz! The action and tragedy! Even the competitive sorcerer won't have these ground-breaking leads! And if you thought this sneak peek got your blood boiling in anticipation, just wait until the release dates. You ain't seen nothing yet!

BY BRYAN "THE COWARDLY LION" CAIRNS

COLOSSUS

MEGGAN

SHADOWCAT

NIGHTCRAWLER

DOUGLOCK

THE SILVER SURFER

ANDY MANGELS'S ALL-NEW REEL MARVEL

(Part One)

He first appeared in March 1966, in Fantastic Four #48, a mysterious and sleek figure who, as the text read, was called "the Silver Surfer, for want of a better name." And yet, there could be no better name for the metallic-skinned man who zoomed through the celestial spaceways, riding aboard an equally metallic surfboard. By the end of the issue, Marvel fans knew that he was the advance scout for Galactus, a world-devouring alien who had picked Earth as his next meal!

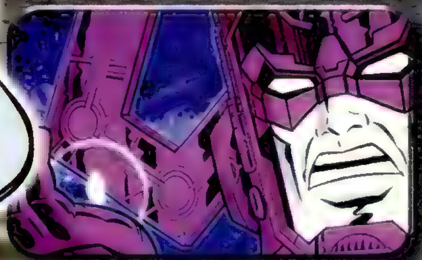
The Silver Surfer proved instantly popular, and was used extensively in the pages of the Fantastic Four and later in his own series. Jack Kirby and Stan Lee's creation survives strong to this day, still soaring the spaceways, still spouting dialogue that could only be spoken by . . . well, the Silver Surfer.

Coming in February, the Silver Surfer will conquer a new dimension in his quest for peace and his beloved Shalla-Bal. After a number of appearances in the recent Fantastic Four syndicated animated series (he did not appear in the FF's 1967 ABC series or the 1978 NBC series), the Silver Surfer will finally be headlining his own regular series on Fox! Produced by Saban Entertainment, The Silver Surfer will have 13 episodes, featuring many of Marvel's popular space heroes and villains, from Galactus and Thanos to Warlock and Beta Ray Bill.

In the series, the Silver Surfer starts out as Galactus's herald, but quickly turns on his master when he realizes the horrors Galactus brings to the galaxy. But when the Surfer tries to return home to Zenn-La, he discovers Galactus has hidden it away! The Surfer must continue searching for his home-world, using his cosmic powers to help others as he surfs through space.

The Silver Surfer's Art Director is Dale Hendrickson, a talented man who has worked on The Simpsons for the last seven years, as well as on series for DIC, Hanna-Barbera, Filmation, and Disney TV, including such super-hero series as Super Friends, New Adventures of Batman, Flash Gordon, and Masters of the Universe. Hendrickson's job on Surfer is the computer animation producer. "There was no computer department (at Saban) before I came here. I built the department," he admits.

So, given the words "computer animation," can we look forward to CGI effects on the series? "It's more like traditional animation, assisted by CGI. We hope to integrate it. There's a dimension to it that's not normally there on traditional animation, but it's not a 3-D Reboot type of show either." Most of the 3-D elements will have a hand-painted look, allowing the CGI elements to be better integrated into the hand-drawn animation. "Everyone who has looked at it has said that it's like nothing they've ever seen, 3-D or 2-D. It's just different. It's a new level. . . fresher and more dynamic." Although much of the CGI work will be for space scenes, Galactus will be rendered entirely in 3-D, as will some Kree bikers and soldiers that show up!



The designs of The Silver Surfer will be very traditional. "We decided very early on that it had to be the Jack Kirby look," says Hendrickson. "Graphically, it's the look I personally enjoy the most of all the renditions of the Surfer that I've looked at. We structured the model sheets and drawings to be our version of that, keeping the essence of the Joe Sinnott inking lines and the Kirby proportions. That's for the traditional animation; when we have a 3-D character, we incorporate the Kirby linework as well. Most of our background space painting is taken lovingly from Kirby comics showing that whole spattered dot thing he liked to do. We've incorporated that with a very heavy brushstroke kind of look so it's a real strong painterly look." Oddly, the late Jack Kirby is not given a screen credit on the series for his creation of or design for the Silver Surfer and Galactus.

The storylines for the series will be a mixture of old and new storylines. "A lot of the older material has been a springboard for the new shows. They didn't want to simply do comic books; they wanted to do an original series, but they want the flavor and feeling of all the original work. . . capturing the essence of the Surfer's mindset and the trauma that's been set up in the comics. We've really made it his story." Related to that, the Fantastic Four do not appear in the series at all, even in the opening trilogy of episodes in which Galactus comes to devour Earth. "We wanted to focus this on the Surfer and his story alone," admits Hendrickson. "We did modify a little bit of history to bring him to Earth. He still has his big battle royale with Galactus. We just found a way to do that without bringing in the other characters."

However, as noted above, other Marvel heroes will show up in the series. One episode has a whole planetful of Beta Ray Bill's people, plus the hammer-wielding alien himself, while Adam Warlock shows up fighting the Kree in an episode entitled "The Forever War." Another familiar character is Nova, a replacement herald for Galactus. "She comes from Earth," says Hendrickson. "They show how she ends up (as his herald) and allude to her having some kind of mutant gene, which kind of leaves the door open for some elaboration in future episodes." Nova appears in several episodes, and will develop a crush on the Surfer.

And speaking of future episodes, the producers are already working on specs and concepts for a second season. "The last script of this season ends on kind of a cliff-hanger," says Hendrickson. Everyone involved is hopeful that The Silver Surfer will get a 26-episode commitment for its second season. "I think The Silver Surfer will revolutionize the look of animation, and hopefully we'll be able to continue. We feel like we've just touched the surface on these first shows."

Coming Next Month in Marvel Vision:

We continue our preview of Fox's new Silver Surfer animated series, with a preview episode guide, plus more cool artwork!

Andy Mangels has been chronicling the history of comic book movies and TV shows for a variety of magazines over the last decade, as well as writing comics such as Bloodwulf, Sliders, and Star Wars: Boba Fett. Resurrected from the pages of Marvel Age Magazine, Andy Mangels's All-New Reel Marvel is a semi-regular feature in Marvel Vision. He is also the co-writer of Marvel's Star Trek: Deep Space Nine!

BEHIND THE SCENES
Here's a rundown of the production team for Fox's Silver Surfer series:

Executive Producer:	Stan Lee
Executive Producer:	Avi Arad
Executive Producer:	Eric Rollman
Producer:	Roy Smith
Production Executive:	Dana Booton
Lead Writer-Developer:	Larry Brody
Art Director:	Dale Hendrickson
CGI Technical Director:	Don McCoy

Welcome to the Marvel Universe that would have been if today's hottest creators had been around at the birth of Marvel Comics. Think of this as the world that might have been. Think of it as the world that might still be becoming.

Darren Auck, whose work on Marvel's warped humor books garnered even more fans than laughs, takes his warped sensibilities to Marvel's immaterial android Avenger... the Vision.

Now those who have followed the Vision's exploits have had their understanding of the Vision's origins redirected a number of times. Once believed to be the android body of the original Human Torch, the Vision (now with the thinking patterns and brainwaves of Simon Williams) went on to first attack the Avengers under the control of Ultron-5... only to shortly later join the team.

But in the world of Time Slip, the world where Darren Auck designs the Vision, there is no confusion as to his origins... for the Vision's beginnings are the same as those of his own creator—Ultron-5.

For here, instead of seeking out the Mad Thinker for the location of the remains of what he believed to be the original Human Torch, Ultron-5 used the scrapped and battered pieces of earlier Ultrons to build a new weapon from which to strike at the Avengers.

And so... pieces of Ultrons 1-4 were assembled to form the ultimate anti-Avenger. And in the moment Ultron expected his greatest victory over his enemies, Ultron instead faced his ultimate defeat. In fact, there would be no Ultron-6, no Ultron-7 or any other generation of Ultron ever again, for not only was this being destroyed, he was erased for all time. His "end" would be the first heroic act of the new Vision.

The Vision, whose appearance was more "human" than any android before him (except, ironically, that of the original Human Torch), used his ability to become immaterial to destroy everything Ultron had built, including the original designs of Ultron written by Dr. Henry Pym.

And so the sins of one programmed generation were passed to another. Just as Ultron had rebelled against his creator, Pym, so would the Vision rebel against Ultron.

For within this patchwork-pieced android, built from the most salvageable bits of his previous four incarnations, there existed a piece of programming long since lost to Ultron-5... a programming that determined that this being would serve mankind above all else. And even though Ultron-5 had long since abandoned this "weak" program, it still existed within the hollowed hull of Ultron-1.

This was Dr. Henry Pym's original program and intention for this free-thinking android.

This was Henry Pym's Vision.

AROUND THE OFFICE

THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT SHINING ON EXECUTIVE VP OF PUBLISHING EXTRAORDINAIRE SHIRREL RHOADES!

by Lysa Hawkins

Shirrel Rhoades is an original in every sense of the word, from his pet alien (please don't feed or touch) that sits on his office couch to his eyeball collection on his desk. This man-in-black is making his mark and the Marvel Universe is all the better for it!

(LH) What exactly does an executive Vice President of publishing do?

(SR) Well, a publishing executive is defined in many different ways at many different magazines and many different publishing companies. In a huge multi-titled publishing company like, say, Hearst Magazines, he/she is often simply a super ad director. In smaller publications, it's being the general manager or the owner or in effect the business manager. In general terms this person is the coordinator and glue and leadership that holds the magazine together.

(LH) So this is what you do for Marvel?

(SR) Well, a large part of what I do for Marvel is try to be the leader of the publishing group that helps pull all the departments together, and to coordinate their efforts to make sure that they all work in sync, toward a common goal.

(LH) Why did you decide to come to Marvel?

(SR) I've always liked comic books. And having worked for three decades in the consumer magazine publishing business with a lot of very well known magazines and publishing companies, I decided at this point in my life I'd love to work for an entertainment company where the whole point of what you're doing is to entertain people. And comic books certainly filled that bill. We don't tell people how to repair their cars. We don't tell them how to decorate their apartments. We don't tell them how to cook an easy meal. We just tell them great stories. And that seemed like something that would be a very worthwhile thing to do.

(LH) What kind of background do you have?

(SR) I think most people get into publishing by accident. Most people when they're little kids say when I grow up, I want to be an astronaut, or a ballerina, or the president of the United States, but very few people say when I grow up I want to be an ad director, or a circulation director, or an assistant editor, or a publisher. It's things that we don't really know about. Also, when we see magazines and comic books what we think about is mostly the editorial side. We think about the articles and the comic stories and we often aren't aware of all the people behind the scenes that make it happen. I started from the other side of the fence in that I got into it because I had a degree in art and was designing publications; then I was asked to write some articles because the editor felt that I was bright. Then I was made an editor. Eventually I decided I wanted to be responsible for how the whole operation worked. So I moved over to the business side and became publishing manager, so most of the jobs that I've had in publishing are managing and publishing. It's fun to be able to make all the pieces of it fit together.

(LH) What direction do you see Marvel going in, say, by the year 2000?

(SR) Well, I think Marvel has had and will continue to have a major role in the world of entertainment. I believe that comic books are a very important and unique art form that communicates to a wide variety of people. Comic books are very accessible to readers because of their visual, sequential story telling nature, so I think that the challenge is to find ways to put comic books in front of future readers. There are many of us that have grown up loving comic books all our lives and continue to be entertained by comic books, but I think that because of the way comic books are sold, not as many new kids discover and come to love comic books the way we did. It's part of my mission and I hope part of Marvel's mission to get comic books out there where new readers can find them and become regular readers.

(LH) You said you like comics. Who is your favorite comic book character and why?

(SR) Oh, that's an awfully hard question because my tastes are so wide and so eclectic. I have in my personal comic book collection, which I've had for years, a lot of Marvel comics, a lot of DC comics, and I have a lot of comic books you've probably never heard of. I have comic books that are rare and some that are very common. I was a big fan of the Mirconauts and Michael Golden's artwork, so to me it's a great thrill to have Michael on staff working for us. I was a big fan of everything, from Eclipse's run of Air Boy to comic books that are humor-based, the early MAD and PANIC comic books and, of course, I've always been a fan of super heroes too.

(LH) All right, one last question....what's with you and the color black? You're not, by chance, related to Johnny Cash?

(SR) Well, I believe that we should all have our own brand identity; therefore I work very hard at being eccentric. I think that when I join a company I decide how I'm going to present myself to that company and to my co-workers. If it's a particular kind of company you have to sort of reflect that, you have to be a little bit of a chameleon. Here at Marvel, I decided that wearing black, which I particularly like (it makes me look thinner), gave me a certain identity that people could associate with me. I wouldn't be lost in the crowd. I would have my own sense of eccentricity that people could kid me about, ask me about. I have the same conversation almost every day with John (Galvin) from the mail room about why I wear black, and every day I try to give him a different answer.

our pal SAL

Sal Buscema is part of one of the most famous brother acts in comics. He is the younger sibling of "Big" John Buscema, one of the all-time comics greats who retired not too long ago. Over the years, Sal has worked on just about every major Marvel title, from the AVENGERS to THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN to ROM, SPACEKNIGHT, though he is best known for his truly incredible nine-year stint on the HULK!

Born in 1936, Sal grew up in Brooklyn, NY, with his big brother serving as a positive role model. Sal credits John with getting him started as an artist. "John, being eight years older than I, had started in the business when I was just a kid. I think he got his first job at Marvel (then known as Timely) in 1948. I was just twelve years old at the time. That's what spurred it on—I had a brother doing comic books.

"He was a great big brother. He was a tremendous influence. Always has been." Sal said he and John have been very supportive of each other. "For years after both of us were well-entrenched in the business, we always discussed art, likes and dislikes. After a while, I hope I was an influence on him, as well.

"I've been drawing for as long as I can remember, so the interest was always there. We both went to the High School of Music and Art (eight years apart, of course), which is now called the School for Performing Arts."

Sal's first job in comics came working alongside big brother John. "When I was in high school, and he was doing the Roy Rogers comic book for Dell Publications in the early fifties, John had me finish up his backgrounds, to help save him time."

John found himself forced to seek work in advertising when the comic book industry fell on hard times in the early fifties. It was a classic case of bad timing for Sal, who chose this period to attempt to break into the business!

"I was ready to (work as a comics artist), but the business was dying in the early fifties. I had to look for work in other

areas, so I entered the commercial art field." Sal worked at a small art studio, then became a ring-welder in a jewelry factory until he enlisted in the army. He served at Ft. Bolvior, just outside of Washington, D.C. "They made me an illustrator. I thought I was going to be a cook or something! (laughter) I worked for two years in the engineering corps."

Following his release from the army, Sal spent the next thirteen years doing various types of advertising work. "In the early to mid-sixties, the comic book industry started making its comeback. John had gotten back into it, and I saw an opportunity to do what I had always wanted to do."

When big brother John returned to Marvel, Sal hoped to follow in his footsteps. There was only one catch! "I had to learn how to do them," Sal confessed. "I kid around with my wife—I say she almost divorced me, because I was literally working every night, just trying to learn how to do comic books."

After a year of self-training, Sal felt he was ready. "I drew some samples of the Hulk—just a little six-page story that I made up. I showed them to Stan, and he liked them. He thought they had some power to them, so he gave me work. I started out as an inker, which is what I really wanted to do."

Sal's first job for Marvel was inking a ten-page western story. After that came an assignment which might have been intimidating to any other beginning artist. "My first really big job was inking John's SILVER SURFER. It was a joy. (Those pages) didn't need an inker, they were so beautiful. (Marvel) should have reproduced them right from the pencils. My first penciling job was THE AVENGERS, and then I went on to do THE SUB-MARINER."

Surprisingly, John and Sal have not worked together very often, despite their combined eighty-plus years in the business. "I think we did four issues of the SILVER SURFER together. The book didn't click (the first time around), for various reasons...it certainly wasn't because of the artwork!

"I don't think we worked together again until I inked him on FANTASTIC FOUR in the mid eighties! I'm one of the few guys that is able to ink John and not lose his beautiful drawings. There weren't too many guys that could do that, but I could, because I was familiar with his drawing. Dan Adkins was another guy who was able to ink John well."

Sal revealed that inking has always been "my first love." Sal lamented that he was pigeon-holed over the years as a penciler. "I've inked a lot of my own stuff, but I really haven't done a lot of inking on other people. That's what I really enjoy doing. Penciling to me is work. Inking is fun!"

Sal named some of the artists he's always wanted to embellish. "I would've loved to have inked Jack Kirby, but I never got the opportunity. I inked one issue of THOR over Walt Simonson, and that was a joy. I would love to be able to ink John Romita Jr.; let me just quit there, or I'm going to get into trouble. But I'm sure there's a whole bunch of other guys I can't think of! (laughter)"

When it comes to his own pencils, Sal prefers inkers who change the work dramatically. "Bill Sienkiewicz is one of the most gifted guys ever to touch a comic book page. He made me look real good. John Romita Sr. is the quintessential professional; he's an extremely talented guy. All the people I'm naming, their work is very powerful. They tend to make a lot of changes in the pencils. I enjoy these guys that go off in their own direction—that's because I'm not a big fan of myself. Joe Sinnott was a wonderful inker."

Sal has worked at Marvel continuously over the past three decades. His pencils have graced every Marvel series from MARVEL TEAM-UP to THE DEFENDERS and everything in between. "I'm happy to be able to say this: there's probably not a major Marvel character that I have not done at one time or another. I may not have had every book as a regular series, but I think I have done at least a few issues of all the major books."

Asked to name his favorite Marvel character, the answer comes as no real surprise: "I've always had a tremendous amount of affection for the incredible Hulk! I'll always have a soft spot in my heart for him. I did him for about nine years. I think I have the record on that. I think Herb Trimpe did about seven and a half years. After nine years, I figured I had to move on."

Sal admitted he prefers the childlike Hulk of the sixties and seventies as compared to the grouchy, intelligent Hulk of recent years. Among his favorite Hulk collaborators, Sal recalled, "Len Wein and I had a really good period there. It was uncanny, what happened between us. It was like telepathy. Len, bless his heart, was always late with the plot. He would kind of give it to me over the phone. A lot of times he didn't have some of the details worked out. We would kick it back and forth...that chemistry between us worked so well. I think that some of the best stuff I ever did was on the HULK."

One of the things Sal liked best about ol' Greenskin was the character's adaptability. "He's the kind of character you can put into any scenario. Spider-Man is most effective in a city environment. Spider-Man doesn't work as well in a primitive environment or in a sci-fi setting. But the Hulk works anywhere. We did all different kinds of settings—fantasy, sci-fi—of course, some worked better than others. But I never tired of the character. I never tired of the possibilities."

Another of Sal's proudest achievements is having launched the SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN series back in 1976. "I did the first fifteen or twenty issues, then I went off and did CAPTAIN AMERICA, or whatever...I picked up (SPECTACULAR) again with issue #134, and did it up to number 238. So I was on it for quite a long time! I may have done that for about 8 or 9 years."

Sal's favorite SPECTACULAR collaborator was J.M. DeMatteis. "He had an excellent insight into the character, and a real gift for getting into the other characters' heads as well. We did about a year and a half together, and it really renewed my enthusiasm for the character."

Among his influences, Sal lists "obviously my brother John, Jack Kirby, John Romita...then I'd have to go with the kind of illustrations that were done from the forties to sixties in magazines like Ladies' Home Journal." Sal also names a number of painters, such as Michelangelo and Watteau, as well as "all the French Impressionists. They are my favorites. I love to study them."

Sal's advice to aspiring young artists? "Never rest on your laurels. There is no easy way to become an accomplished artist. There's a lot of hard work in it, and it's a never-ending process. If the learning process ever stops, the only thing that is going to happen is that (you) are going to regress. I firmly believe that art is a living thing. Creativity of any kind has to be constantly nurtured; it has to constantly grow; because if it doesn't, the only alternative to growth is death."

As proof of this, Sal takes a weekly drawing class at a nearby school known as the Art League. He has been approached to teach a few classes himself, but these days is too busy inking for our Distinguished Competition and penciling books for Marvel like JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY.

Sal has no plans to retire anytime soon, like his famous brother. "John is quite a few years older than me!" Sal did note, however, that "If I don't do comic books, I'm sure I would probably be doing something else, like painting or sculpture." Another hobby is community theater. "I love theater. When time allows, I have been involved as an actor, onstage."

Both Buscema boys have great reputations for being fast. Sal revealed, "On an average day, I usually do about three pages a day. Back in the seventies, I once did breakdowns on five books in one month. That was about 100 pages. I still remember one long day when I did thirteen pages! If I'm both penciling and inking, I can do about two pages a day. Generally, I work five or six hours a day, maybe seven."

Sal has been married to his wife Joan for thirty-seven years. They have three children, but none of them has pursued art as a career. Still, the Buscema legacy could continue—Sal notes, "There's always the grandchildren!"

Asked for any closing comments, Sal enthused, "I'd just like to add that I'm happy to be here. It's been a lot of fun."

—Barry Dutter

MARVEL'S SILLIEST MOMENTS presents

SEASON'S BEATINGS

The Incredible Hulk vs. Santa Claus—the battle that had to happen! Okay, so it didn't have to, but it did anyway, and it happened in issue #378 of Greenskin's mag! How did this clash between the Jade Giant and Kris Kringle come about? Read on, True Believer, and all the details of this X-Mas extravaganza will be revealed!

Our story opened with the Rhino, who was down on his luck and hiding out in an alley. He had been permanently bonded to his costume, and was regretting the fact that he was alone and unwanted at Christmastime. Drinking booze from a brown paper bag, he was more wino than Rhino! He whined, "I've got NO money! NO prospects! NO friends, except for other super-villains...and they never want to talk about football or broads, or anything except fighting super heroes! My life is in the SEWER!"

The down-and-out Rhino decided to rob a bank, reasoning, "That always puts me in a better mood..." But then he spotted the Hulk nearby and realized robbing a bank was not a good idea, since he would only get clobbered again. This created a dilemma for our villain: he couldn't go into action as the Rhino, but he desperately needed cash! What to do?

Rhino figured out a plan. He punched out a department store Santa, and then took his costume. It was the perfect disguise, since it covered every inch of his Rhino suit—even his horn was covered by the Santa hat! (It was never satisfactorally explained how Rhino was able to go to the bathroom for all those months if he had a costume that could not be removed!)

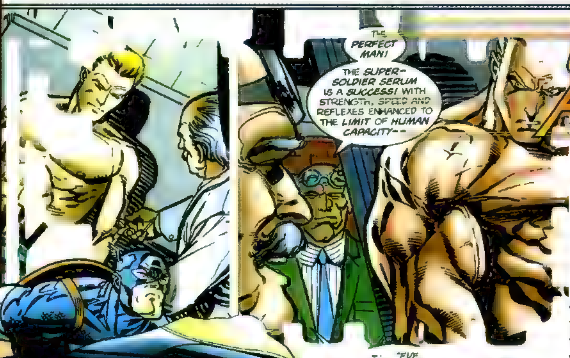
Disguised as jolly old Santa, the Rhino started asking for donations from pedestrians, using his super-strength to ensure everyone was in a giving mood! Just then, the manager of the department store rushed out and told this psycho Santa that he was needed inside. It warmed the heart of the Rhino to see the smiling faces of the happy children—until he actually started talking to the little brats!

When one obnoxious tyke gave him a hard time, Rhino warned the kid, "I'll give you a HO HO HO right up the WHAZZOO! Get it?" The kid got it, and kept his mouth shut! When kids started demanding too many toys for Christmas, Rhino exploded at them! "GIVE! GIVE! GIVE! You want everything HANDED to you! Why not do what I do? TAKE stuff! See it? Want it? TAKE IT!"

Rhino started to turn from Santa into Scrooge and was about to toss one kid all the way to the North Pole when the Hulk showed up, calling himself "the Spirit of Fractures Yet To Come!" A big battle ensued, carrying the Ho-Ho-Hulk and the grouchy Grinch throughout the rest of the department store. They caused so much Christmas chaos, they gave a whole new meaning to the phrase "Deck the Halls!"

The fight ended when a little girl with tears in her eyes asked why Santa was beating on another man. The girl wondered if the Rhino was a fake, and if there was no such thing as Santa Claus. In a surprising change of heart, Rhino told the girl that he was the real Santa, and that the reason he was beating on Hulk was because Hulk was being naughty. Both combatants promised to be nice from now on.

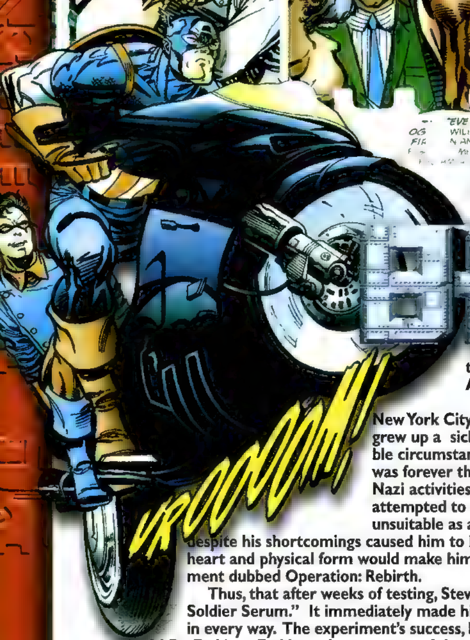
Then the Hulk and the Rhino worked together, bringing Season's Greetings to all the children in the department store. All of which goes to show that the magic of Christmas truly can make miracles happen! (Although Rhino didn't get his Christmas wish—he was still stuck in that costume! Guess you could say he got a lump of coal in his stocking that year!)



Captain America

"Then join hand in hand,
Brave Americans all!
By uniting we stand,
by dividing we fall."

— John Dickinson



We all need rallying points in our lives. A symbol to look towards and direct our efforts through. A place in our hearts where we can focus our efforts, and nothing can stand against us. Throughout history, there have been many shining examples, but none have been more enduring as

BEAST FILES

those personified by one man.

A man known to all as Captain America.

Steve Rogers was born during the Depression in New York City, and spent much of his formative years there. He grew up a sickly, frail young man in a poor family. Despite the terrible circumstances surrounding him at such a tender age, his heart was forever thinking of others. When he saw newsreel footage of the Nazi activities in Europe, he was horrified and immediately attempted to enlist. Unfortunately, his frail stature made him unsuitable as an enlisted man, but his pleas to be allowed to join despite his shortcomings caused him to be noticed by a General who decided this young man's heart and physical form would make him the perfect specimen for a secret government experiment dubbed Operation: Rebirth.

Thus, that after weeks of testing, Steve Rogers became the initial recipient of the "Super-Soldier Serum." It immediately made his weak young body as perfect as a human body can be, in every way. The experiment's success, however, was short-lived as a Nazi spy immediately murdered Dr. Erskine. Erskine, who was wary of the dangers of spies, had not fully committed the process to paper, and thus the secret of the process died with him.

However, after outfitting and training Rogers, America had a new fighting symbol for her boys fighting in WWII. And through his exploits, countless lives were saved. For the duration of his WWII activities, Captain America teamed up with his teen-aged sidekick, Bucky. The duo were loved by all, until the fateful day when they tried to intercept a deadly radio-guided bomb in the final days of the war. Bucky and Cap climbed aboard the deadly plane and did their best to defuse the bomb. However, at the last moment, Rogers was thrown from the plane into the icy waters below, while the plane exploded shortly afterwards, killing Bucky.

Decades later Captain America was found by a group of Eskimos in a block of ice. The Eskimos worshipped the man trapped in the ice as a god, until The Sub-Mariner [See File: Namor] in one of his irrational fits of anger, attacked the Eskimos and hurled the block of ice into the sea. A few days later, his body was found floating in the water by the Avengers, completely thawed. To the newly formed Avengers' surprise, the strange man was indeed Captain America, and he turned out to be alive, saved from death by the complex nature of the serum working in his blood as he lay in suspended animation.

It was in his capacity as an Avenger that Captain America has most often been remembered. He is at his best when leading or working with "earth's mightiest heroes" and is without a doubt one of that team's greatest assets. His brilliant tactics, boundless combat experience, and battle prowess have served him well no matter what menace he has come to face. He is, indeed, an inspiration to us all.

NOTES:

Captain America is the peak of human perfection. The super-soldier serum coursing through his veins allows him great strength, endurance, agility, and reactions that far exceed the greatest Olympic athletes in any field. He can lift/press around 800 lbs, and run non-stop for extended periods of time. His body doesn't seem to produce fatigue poisons, and is therefore capable of working with very little rest. He has also displayed an accelerated healing ability that is attributed to his higher metabolism. Some theorize that he may be immune to aging; however, this remains to be seen.

Cap's skills are also very finely honed. He has proven himself to be a master of at least 12 distinctive martial arts as well as gymnastics; he combines them together with his vast experience to form a fighting style uniquely his. His indestructible shield is the only known synthesis of adamantium and vibranium. Adamantium is the hardest metal in the world, while vibranium is a metal capable of absorbing both force and sound completely. Thus through this synthesis, Cap does not experience any recoil from the impact of any projectile hitting his shield. Further, he has learned how to utilize the aerodynamic disc shape of his shield as a thrown weapon with such skill that he can cause it to impact any desired target and have it rebound back to any point he wishes.

His most powerful ability, however, is that of his mind. There is no greater tactical mind in all of my experiences than his. No one can compare with the analytical genius that Cap has displayed in countless battle situations. Captain America believes intensely that where there is a will there is a way. And where he is concerned, as long as there is an America to fight for and freedom to defend, there is always a will.

"Whosoever knows fear...!"

Origin Of The Species:

MAN-THING

He's a lumbering pile of sludge, he's got blank red eyes, a trunk-like nose and he lives in a Florida swamp. He can't speak, moves in a clumsy manner and is apparently mindless. Meet the Man-Thing. Marvel's most offbeat hero, he was trapped inside himself, with his uncoordinated, distorted body and a head that resembled a gas mask. He came out of the turbulent early 1970s, when the Marvel Universe had been populated by monsters of every shape and size.

Before this period, Marvel monsters were safe stalwarts like the gigantic dragon Fin Fang Foom, It, The Living Colossus and Spragg the Living Hill. However, the '70s brought on such bizarre creatures of the night as The Ghost Rider, the Son of Satan, Morbius (Marvel's only *living* vampire), Man-Wolf, The Living Mummy, Werewolf by Night and Dracula, but Man-Thing was far more different than any of them.

Man-Thing started life as Ted Sallis, a military scientist. In 1950s' monster movies and comic books, military scientists were the heroes; smart, square-jawed, pipe-smoking, clean-cut guys who were resourceful enough to find a way to kill the giant bugs/aliens/robots just when the world seemed doomed.

By the early '70s, military scientists were considered villains, when such dubious inventions as Napalm, Agent Orange and the Neutron Bomb (designed to kill people but not damage property) came to the public's attention. While the Nebraska-born, Stanford-educated Sallis isn't evil, he's clearly shown to be misguided and suffers a guilty conscience over his government work.

Man-Thing made his debut in SAVAGE TALES #1, when Ted Sallis was working on a S.H.I.E.L.D.-funded experiment in the Florida Everglades. Sallis was assigned to "Project Gladiator," an attempt to unlock one of the greatest secrets of the Marvel Universe—to recreate the super-soldier formula that turned Steve Rogers into Captain America. To his credit, he found a way to modify it.

Worried about his project falling into enemy hands, Sallis destroyed his notes, so no one could duplicate it. Unfortunately, his wife Ellen betrayed him to the terrorist group A.I.M. (Advanced Idea Mechanics, you know, the guys whose jumpsuits resemble yellow trashcans!) Sallis injected himself with the untested super-soldier serum, fled into the swamp and crashed. Instead of giving him a Captain America physique to fight the terrorists with, the serum, mixed with the mystical properties of the swamp, transformed him into a seven-foot, mindless monstrosity whose body was composed of weeds, vines, algae and other elements of the swamp. If that weren't bad enough, his hands and feet are now clawed, he's hunched over so badly that he has a slouching, twisted walk and he smells really, really bad! (Living in a swamp will do that to you...)

Man-Thing first showed up in 1972. At the same time, DC Comics unveiled their own marshland monstrosity, Swamp-Thing. Like Man-Thing, S-T was also a scientist whose experiment backfires when he's attacked by a group of spies and takes refuge in the swamp. Despite the similarities, the two appear to be completely coincidental and are vastly different. Marvel dubbed theirs "The most startling swamp creature of all!" so readers wouldn't get confused.

Both Man-Thing and Swamp Thing seem to have been inspired by The Heap. The Heap was a 1940s comic book creature who wandered around his swamp, stopping to kill an occasional Nazi. (He was a World War One pilot whose body merged with the swamp. Both Swampy and Manny added a scientific bent to both characters to at least partially explain the transformation.)

Man-Thing's home is a fetid swamp in Citrusville, Florida. As you ask yourself "Well, how many adventures can he have in a fetid, Florida swamp?," it's important to note that this swamp also holds the "Nexus of all realities." The Nexus is an interdimensional porthole that allows beings from other realities to visit our own (like Howard The Duck did). Man-Thing is guardian of the Nexus. He's also Citrusville's answer to Bigfoot, a creature few people meet but many believe to be a hoax. "The mindless, misshapen monstrosity," as he's often called in his book, is a psychic empath. He "feels" the emotions of others, human and animal. Positive emotions like courage bring him pleasure and/or make him curious. Violent, negative emotions like anger, hatred and especially fear bring him pain. Fear is the one emotion that drives him into a frenzy. He immediately attacks the source to silence that emotion and cease his pain.

When encountering a fearful (or angry) person, Man-Thing's hand excretes a type of sulfuric acid. If the person is unafraid, his moist, slimy fingers emit a soapy mucus. Either way, shaking hands with him would be a drag.

Man-Thing's touch can be fatal. Once, he burned through a man's chest all the way to his heart. People he has left alive have had their hair, mouth, hands and/or faces melted. As every Marvelite should know by heart, "Whosoever knows fear burns at the Man-Thing's touch!"

In Man-Thing stories, the creature confronts real-life monsters. Not vampires or werewolves, but government conspiracies, abusive teachers, police corruption, domestic abuse and pollution. Alan Moore received lavish praise in the mid-1980s for doing the same thing in his Swamp Thing stories, but Steve Gerber beat him to it by over a decade.

The monster also makes an unusual main character. Stories were structured like a "Twilight Zone" episode; the "walk-on" characters of each tale usually appeared in the book only once, everyday people whose lives drifted into the supernatural, with Rod Serling's part filled by a 500-pound, mute, uncoordinated beast.

Maybe (as in one gripping tale), a drunk driver crashes into a bus and the survivors (who include a veteran back from the war, a young woman, a draft dodger and the drunk driver) have to make it across the swamp. Man Thing is incidental, watching them from a distance, stepping in only to kill the occasional snake and/or to punish the wicked. With half the stories he's in, Man-Thing doesn't even participate until the very end. He usually follows a group of characters and observes their emotional outbursts.

For a mute, mindless monster, Man-Thing has a long list of friends and enemies. He was even a member of the 'Legion Of Monsters', a short-lived (one appearance) and vaguely ridiculous team of monsters working for the good of mankind. (Morbius and the original Ghost Rider were also members.) His best friend was Richard Rory, an idealistic teenager who could best be described as a "hippie Rick Jones." Despite all his idealism, Rory later showed up in the pages of SHE-HULK as a smug yuppie.

Other friends include the old wizard, Dakimh The Enchanter and his protegé, Jennifer Kale. Although Kale dresses like Red Sonja's trampy sister, she's actually a modern American girl. His enemies are an impressive lot. Man-Thing has fought more demons and hellspawn than an exorcist, but his most impressive villain was an ordinary psychotic.

The Foolkiller was a maniac who would kill anyone he deemed a fool. What made him so scary is that he would notify his targets in advance, coldly informing them that they have lived like a fool and will soon die like one. Another enemy is D'Spayre, a demon who thrived on weakness and fear, the emotion Man-Thing hates the most. Demons are a recurring threat in MAN-THING, as they keep coming through the Nexus and attacking construction workers and others unlucky enough to be in the swamp.

The Swamp Creature's most famous friend has to be Howard The Duck, who actually made his debut in a MAN-THING story. The angry, cigar-smoking duck appeared in several MAN-THING comics and eventually starred in a book of his own. Howard was on an adventure with Man-Thing when he wound up "trapped in a world he never made." The duck never forgot Man-Thing, however. In fact, when Howard The Duck embarked on his STAR WARS parody "Star Waugh," Man-Thing was cast in the crucial Chewbacca role.

Man-Thing is nearly indestructible. He's had his face blown off, burned off, punched in and he's emerged no worse for wear (he simply grew a new head). Similarly, his arms, legs and whole body have been able to regenerate, even when he's been torn to pieces. He is, after all, composed of vegetation. He has a unique fighting style that has served him well; he lets his opponents punch away pieces of him until they get tired.

After his SAVAGE TALES debut, Man-Thing resided in FEAR, which became ADVENTURES INTO FEAR, before he got his own book. After that was canceled, he became, like Namor and Hulk when they lost their books, a popular guest star/sparring partner. He made the rounds in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE and MARVEL TEAM-UP (beautifully drawn by John Byrne).

He has gone toe-to-toe with the Hulk, Spidey and even The Micronauts. In one story, he even assisted The Lizard, another scientist-turned-monster. (Remember: The Lizard can control all swamp life!)

Man-Thing resurfaced with his own book again in 1979, also called MAN-THING. It lasted half the run of the first series, 11 issues instead of 22, and boasted an appearance by Chris Claremont (Steve Gerber appeared in the original series). In the first issue, an old friend of Ted Sallis finds Man-Thing and sets out to re-educate him. Incredibly, Man-Thing begins to learn and remember—he even spells out his name (T-E-D) with children's blocks before his friend is gunned down by overzealous government agents. Sadly, all his work on Man-Thing is gone to waste as the creature reverts to mindlessness again.

In 1997, Man Thing has returned with his own comic, this one imaginatively titled MAN-THING. One reason Man-Thing remains a cult favorite is that he's always attracted Marvel's most thoughtful writers. His unique alienation helped such talented writers as Gerry Conway (who wrote M-T's first appearance), Chris Claremont and now J.M. DeMatteis to do some of their best, most offbeat work. Similarly, artists like Mike Ploog, Frank Brunner, Ed Hannigan and others got to draw the muck monster.

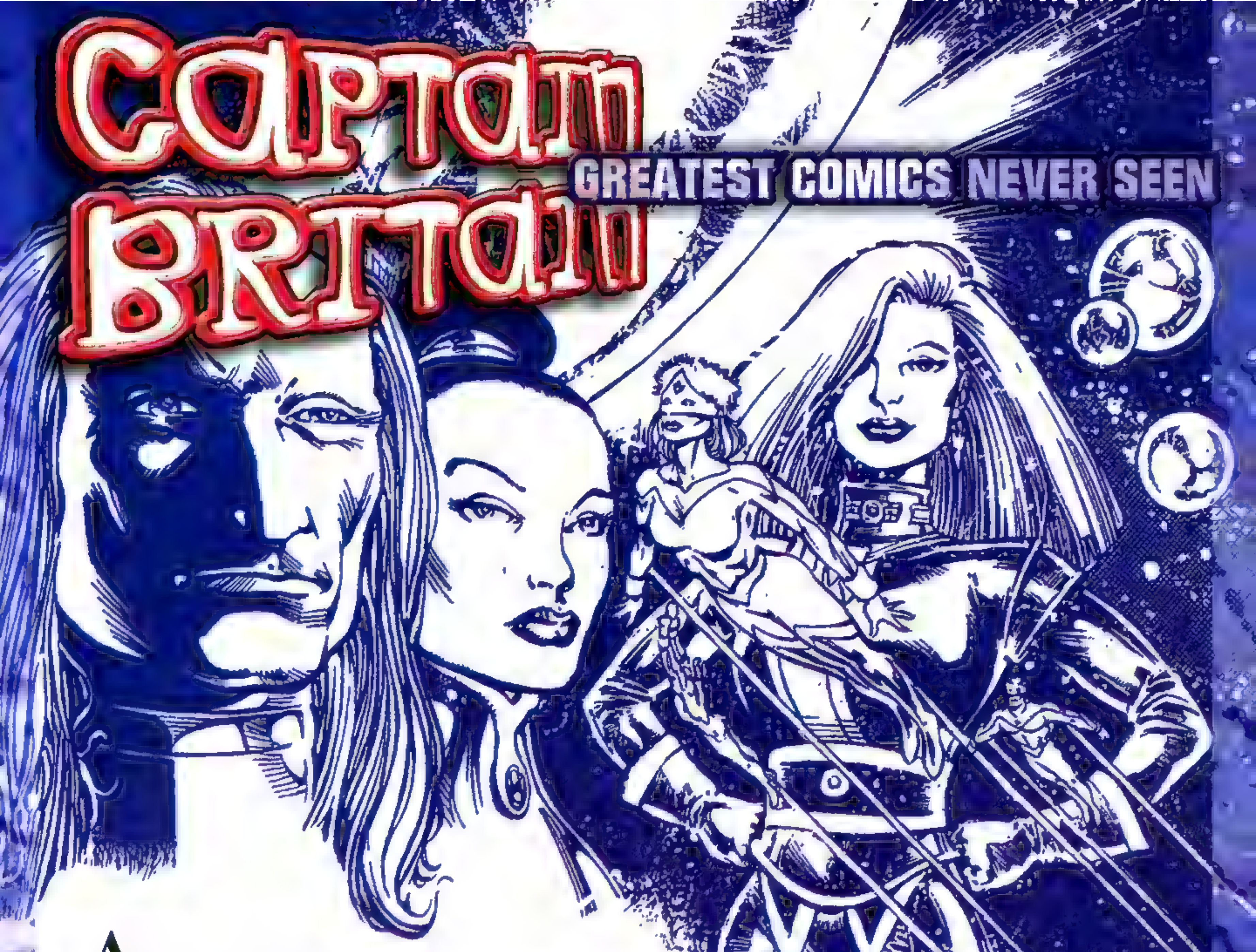
One character we learned very little about the first time around was Man Thing's wife, Ellen Sallis. We saw nothing of her after she betrayed her husband in SAVAGE TALES #1. Ellen was one of the first people to learn that "whosoever knows fear burns at the Man-Thing's touch" and it was just assumed she was dead. Ellen returns in the new MAN-THING and we see that she didn't die in his first appearance, but actually became a barfly, so deep was her grief at betraying her husband. She can't forget her betrayal, as Man-Thing burned half her face (which she keeps covered with her hair). Ellen now has a shot at redemption; Man-Thing has just sought her out to help him recover his identity. (Maybe they'll change the title to MAN-THING & WIFE!)

Nobody knows what the future holds for Marvel's muck-encrusted mockery, but let's hope for a long run on the book so we can find out!

— Pat Jankiewicz

Captain Britain

GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN



A few years back, Marvel U.K. was considered the "hot" new comics company. Everyone in comics was talking about the second English invasion. With titles like DEATH'S HEAD 2 (by Liam "Man-Thing" Sharp) and MOTOR MOUTH (by Gary Frank), they could do no wrong. Marvel U.K. was the place from which Fantastic Four's Salvador Larocca and X-Men's Carlos Pacheco and Bryan Hitch first became known to American audiences. It broke all the rules about comics. And then, mysteriously, something happened... something terrible... and the Marvel U.K. offices closed and have never reopened since. Many of the active projects at the time were discarded or returned to their creators.

But there was one project that couldn't stay buried for long. A project that would at least see light in the pages of...

THE GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

Captain Britain was to be a brand new ongoing series written by Dan Abnett and penciled by Bryan Hitch. Certain situations necessitated, though, that Bryan would ink instead of pencil this series, so Andrew Currie (Captain America/Nick Fury, Star Trek) came in to do the penciling.

Only 16 pages were completed on this series before the ill-timed close of Marvel U.K.. To Paul Neary, the Editor-In-Chief of Marvel U.K., this was to be his pet project. Neary was no stranger to Captain Britain, having been the editor on the 14-issue Captain Britain Magazine. This new series featured a brand new Captain Britain with a brand new costume. It wasn't even Brian Braddock anymore (who was, of course, busy becoming Britannic in the pages of Excalibur).

The story that Dan had mapped out was one which dealt with all of the multiple universes that Alan Moore had set up in his run of Captain Britain with

Alan Davis (see X-MEN ARCHIVES: CAPTAIN BRITAIN #1-7—Tuohy). This series would feature one of the countless alternative versions of Captain Britain who was sent to our Earth by accident.

In this epic, interdimensional policemen, referred to as Dreadnauts, were the primary enemy for the new Captain Britain. All this new Britain was aware of was the sense that Earth was the focal point of some terrible encroaching disaster from the stars. It would be Captain Britain's duty to solve the mystery as to what this coming disaster was, first of all, and then how to stop it and save the universe one more time.

Also, Dan's plan was to feature the return of the Fury, a symbiote last destroyed by Captain Britain and the female Captain U.K. in Alan Moore's "Jasper's Warp" saga.

Originally, the Fury was created by Sir James Jaspers to kill all of England's super heroes so that he would be the only hero. Dan's plan was to have the Fury rebuild itself and then begin killing off all the various alternate Captain Britains in the multiverse.

Of course, this fantastic story never came to be. And that's why it belongs in the annals of the **GreatestComics Never Seen.**

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BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER!

MARVEL AND PARAMOUNT JOIN FORCES FOR FIRST EVER ALL-KLINGONESE COMIC BOOK!

If you don't think that we mere mortals at mighty Marvel are busting our already blistered behinds every second of every day to bring you brand new brainstorms from the House of Ideas, you'll change your cheatin' mind the day STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY #18 hits the stands! At first glance, this cryptic comic appears completely unreadable! And it is! That is, unless you turn to the special glossary inside which will allow you to decode the book, which is written entirely in Klingonese!

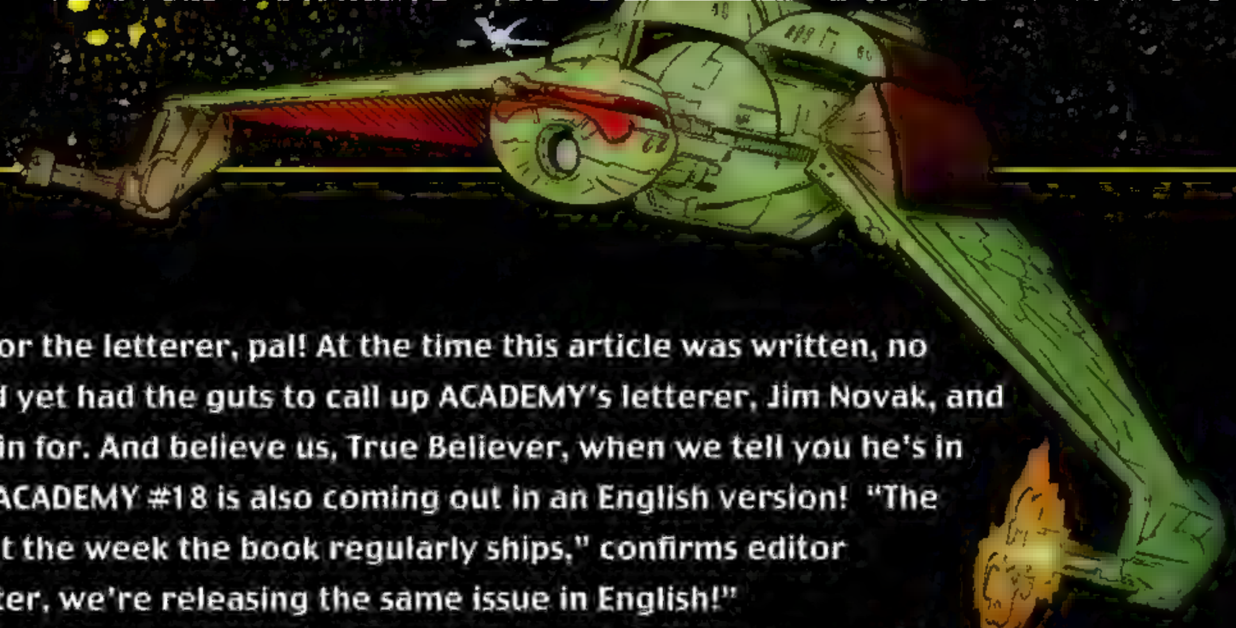
Yes, you heard right: Klingonese! "I wanted something new and interesting for the series that hadn't been done before anywhere else," explains ACADEMY's writer, Chris Cooper. "Because this is the only Trek book that isn't related continuity-wise to one of the television shows, it's the perfect forum for taking risks, breaking ground, and doing other weird and interesting things." One thing Chris had wanted to do for a long time was a silent issue. "It's sort of the holy grail of comic book writers," he explains. "It's a huge challenge to do an issue where there are no word balloons, and yet the story is perfectly clear. Then I realized that I could take that concept one step further, and script it in Klingonese!"

The above mentioned story is told from the point of view of the Klingon First Cadre, a squad of young warriors-in-training who tangled with Starfleet's Omega Squad early in the series' run. The encounter ended with the brutal murder of Omega Squad's leader, Kamillah Goldstein by First Cadre's Kovold! (whoa!) The Klingons returned home triumphant in the eyes of their peers, but their actions were frowned upon by their elders. Now, prevented from joining in the fight against the Dominion, First Cadre, led by the curvaceous but cruel B'Essa'Al, seeks to enlarge their reputation, and inspire their fellow warriors, by finding the fabled Sword of Kahless!

"I'd really wanted to bring back First Cadre," says Chris, "but I didn't want it to be just like the first time they appeared. Then I thought, why not tell it from the Klingon point of view? And then I thought, why not plot it as though it were a silent issue, and script it in Klingonese?" Fortunately for artist Chris Renaud, the plot, which was mercifully written in English, offered specific instructions for panel breakdowns and for facial expressions and movement of characters. "I had to make sure that the story could be figured out just by looking at the art," says the penciler. "That way, in case people don't want to bother with the glossary, they can still tell what's going on." But it was all a piece of cake for Renaud anyway! "Good storytelling is important to me on a regular basis," he acknowledges, "so I was ready for this one!"

Well, almost ready. It had been a while since First Cadre made their appearance in SFA #4, and a few new members would have to be created for issue #18, including one with pop-eyes and a metal jaw! "Because First Cadre are younger than the Klingons shown in the reference I had from Deep Space Nine , I kind of adapted them by putting sashes on them for a more "modern" look," says Renaud. "Also, the males don't have those traditional furry sleeves. Instead, I showed their naked arms so you could get a feel for the power of the characters. That's the nice thing about comics — you can really push elements like costuming. Everyone can look great all the time, because it's a drawing!"

A more daunting prospect than the art was the translation of the script. When he first conceived of the all-Klingonese issue, die-hard Trek fan Cooper was convinced that he would have to translate the whole issue himself. However, using ACADEMY's fan mail file and the Internet, Chris was able to track down Dr. Lawrence Schoen, a self-proclaimed Klingon language expert. Schoen kindly agreed to undertake the translation, and Cooper was off the hook. "Let's just say there would have been a lot less dialogue if I'd had to translate it myself," he admits sheepishly.



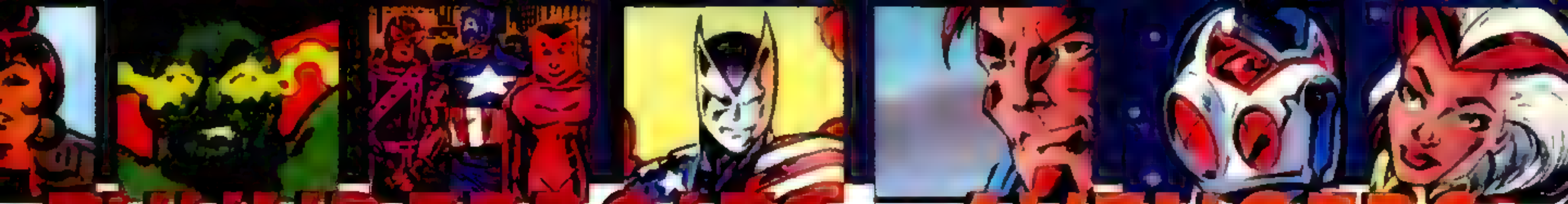
Yeah, yeah. Save it for the letterer, pal! At the time this article was written, no one in the editorial office had yet had the guts to call up ACADEMY's letterer, Jim Novak, and tell him exactly what he was in for. And believe us, True Believer, when we tell you he's in for a lot! Because STARFLEET ACADEMY #18 is also coming out in an English version! "The Klingonese version comes out the week the book regularly ships," confirms editor Bobbie Chase. "Two weeks later, we're releasing the same issue in English!"

Only the Klingonese version will feature a Klingonese-to-English glossary, with the Klingonese text written in phonetic English rather than in Klingon script. "That was my favorite page to draw," jokes Chris Renaud. "It was just one little old guy with a pointer!" The word balloons and captions in the all-Klingonese issue will be done in the same fashion. "It would just be impossible to read if we did it in Klingon script," says Cooper. While the glossary will not cover every word in the book, it will cover all the key words and phrases used in the issue so that readers should have no trouble decoding the script. The glossary will also contain important background information on various characters and events. "For example," explains Chris, "Kahless, who figures heavily in the story, is the founder of the Klingon Empire. So there'll be an entry explaining who he is. We want to give readers a fighting chance at understanding the story as well as being able to translate the dialogue!"

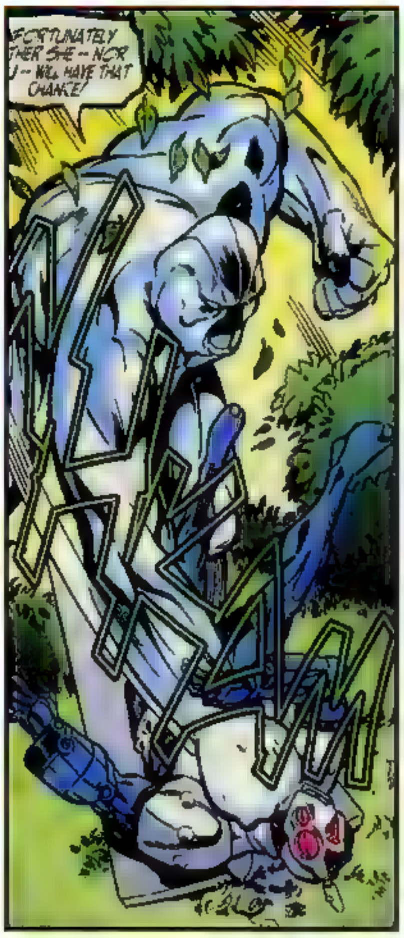
In order to give readers that chance, Chris Cooper had to pay special attention to the scripting, making sure that the English words he was using had already been established in Klingonese. "It's very hard to script," he moans. "You've got to do so much triple thinking! What is the key word, what is the key concept, and how do I arrange everything in such a way that someone reading only a few words could understand it?"

But Cooper isn't complaining! "STAR TREK is one of the few fictional universes where you can do something like this. When you think about it, there aren't many fictional universes that actually have a working language created for them! The only other one I can think of is those Tolkien books. What's also nice about this is that it can't be done in other comic books. They don't have a working language — and we do!" Paramount (TREK's parent company) first began experimenting with the Klingon language in STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE. "There were only brief phrases of Klingonese in the first Trek movie; things like 'aim' and 'fire!'" says Cooper. "Then Paramount hired Marc Okrand, who was a linguist, and he took the existing bits and pieces of the language, added a linguistic background to it, and shaped the whole thing into a working language."

And now, Cooper and Renaud have brought that language to comics in fine style! The



THUNDERBOLTS • AVENGERS •



By Bryan Cairns

Something is amiss here.

Ever since the mysterious Thunderbolts exploded onto the scene, these villains masquerading as heroes have had one simple agenda: to conquer the world. The former Avenger Black Widow was the first to uncover their dark, dirty secret, but even with their identities recently blown, it no longer matters. The Thunderbolts have been hiding out on a satellite orbiting the Earth where no one has been able to find them. This January, in the double-sized THUNDERBOLTS #12, Baron Zemo finally puts his nefarious master plan into warp drive and is succeeding when the unexpected occurs. Some of the T-Bolts have a change of heart and rebel. To add to the pandemonium, Earth's Mightiest Heroes and Marvel's First Family crash the party after Jolt disables the satellite's cloaking device. With a slew of heroes just itching for some action, things couldn't look worse for our new-found protectors. So why is Zemo smiling behind that mask?

"The setup at the beginning of issue #12 is it's the T-Bolts vs. the Fantastic Four and the Avengers, but you're not rooting for the side you thought you'd be rooting for," reveals the book's crafty writer, Kurt Busiek.

It turns out the heroes are literally not in control of themselves. In SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP #7, the Thunderbolts' minds were taken over by a device. Now that it is in the clutches of Zemo, he intends on making mind puppets out of various army and world leaders. By the time the Fantastic Four and the Avengers burst into the satellite, he has taken them over too. While Zemo doesn't quite accomplish his ultimate goal, Busiek and Editor Tom Brevoort are giving the silent treatment about further details of the story or its ending. And maybe fans wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm really reluctant to say too much because I think one of the strong points of the series up until now is that people haven't been able to predict what we're going to do next," says Brevoort. "The

THUNDERBOLTS • AVENGERS •

fact that they don't know where any of this stuff is going and the fact that we continue to have them turn the pages and surprise them is a big part of what makes this series a go."

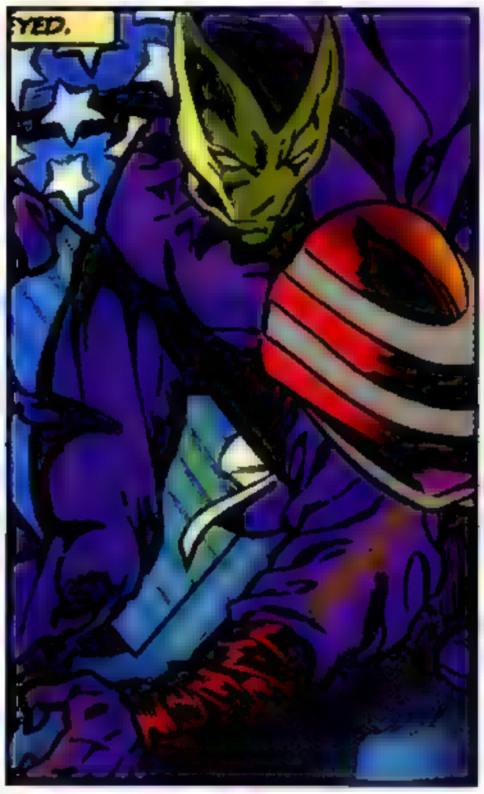
The outcome of this extravaganza is a major turning point that spins the book into unexplored territory and a new direction. The public knows the truth about the T-Bolts, and the super heroes would love to run into any of them and kick their keisters back into prison. Some of the Thunderbolts have parted ways, so with an uncertain future ahead, could a return to their old and wicked ways be their sole option?

"The position the Thunderbolts are in is people know who they are, they know they are super-villains, but these guys have had a taste of being heroes or being treated like them. And so it's not as if they can flip a switch and go back to being villains," says Busiek. "For a year, the Beetle has gotten everything he's ever wanted in life. Can he go back to screwing it up and being a loser?"

Similarly, many of his teammates come to the same conclusion about their past lives. But despite their career changes and good intentions, the T-Bolts' revelation is about to throw them into a whirlpool of problems. In DEADPOOL, the Great Lakes Avengers declared themselves the Lightning Rods, the West Coast branch of the Thunderbolts. That gesture just became tainted. More than a little miffed at the deception, the Lightning Rods will be taking a crack at these deceivers. Hercules is also going to pay the team a friendly visit to settle the score with Atlas. Seems he's still a bit ticked at the time the Masters of Evil including Atlas, then known as Goliath, attacked Avengers' Mansion, hospitalized Hercules and gave him brain damage. Well, now the demi-god wants to repay the favor, in spades.

"Issues #13 and onward are the aftermath," reveals Brevoort. "The T-Bolts are dealing with the fallout; they're on the run, hunted and hounded; they're now on the outside." Gee, maybe now isn't the best of times to inform them the dimension Zemo plucked Atlas from will be playing a big role in the next story arc either.

The T-Bolts will also encounter the secret agency S.H.I.E.L.D., tussle with Graviton, one of the Avengers' heavy-hitter foes, and deal with the ramifications of the signal the Growing Man sent in issue #5, and a rematch with the new Masters of Evil is scheduled. And don't forget an embittered and vengeful Zemo is lurking about as are the rest of their former colleagues in the super-villain



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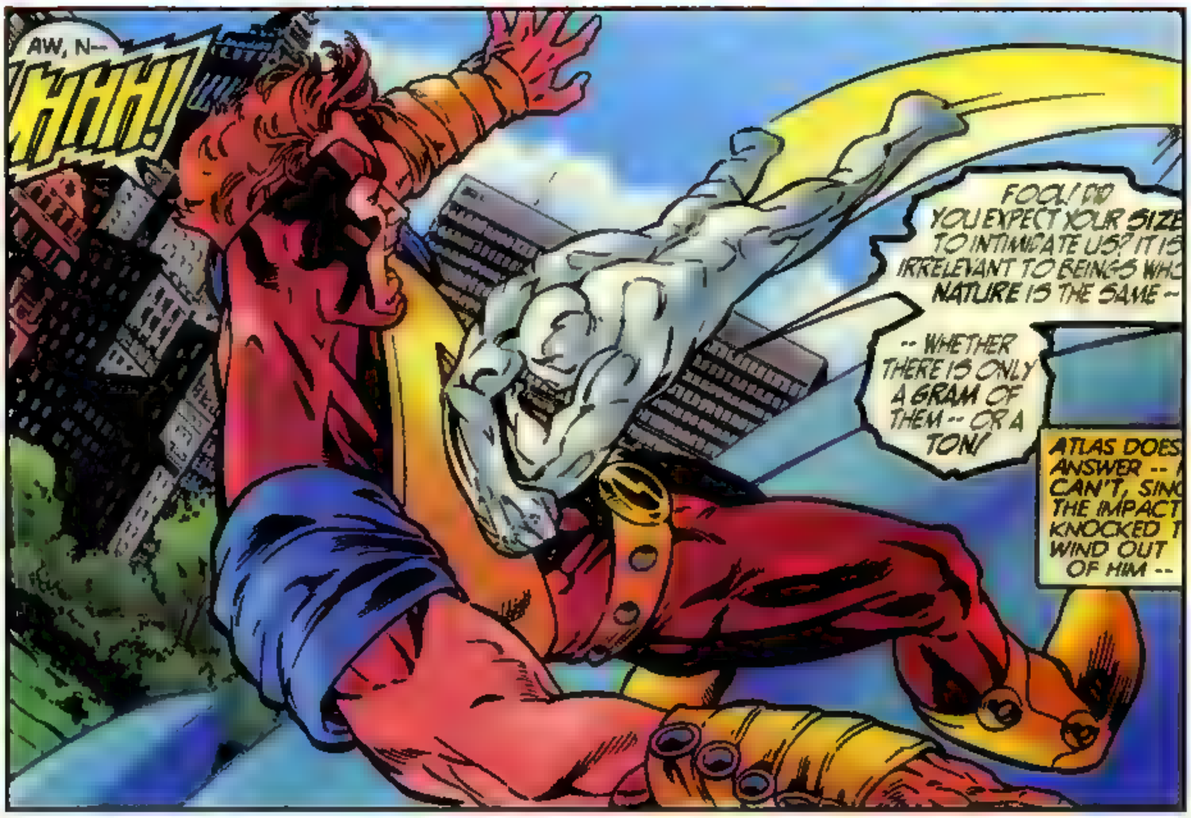

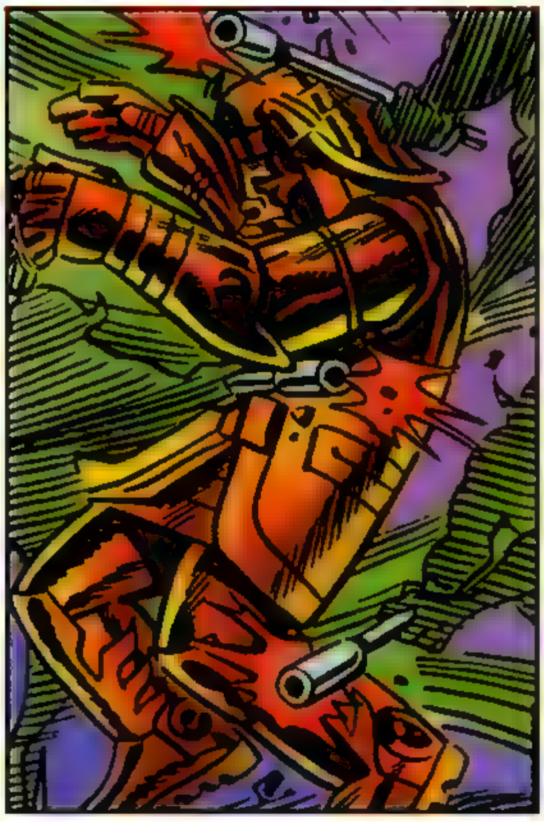

community. How will they respond to all this? As an extra bonus, there's a create-a-villain contest in WIZARD's upcoming Dark Book edition. Next year, the winner's creation will also appear to plague the team.

With the imposter aspect out in the open, Busiek says they are now freer to explore the members' backgrounds. Brevoort adds there's stuff planned for everyone: "Most of the balls in the air now will continue to be in the air with new ones being added."

Atlas's history will be spotlighted along with his feelings towards Dallas Riordan. Techno will react to having an organic body and what to do with it. Mach-1 and Songbird's romance will play out in the future.

"We'll also be seeing some interesting personality switches going on with Songbird as events change around her," hinted Brevoort. "And I think she even gets to do wrestling moves in issue #14, so that's something to look forward to."

Yet with Zemo on a hiatus from his traitorous teammates, there is a void that needs to be filled. Who will take charge of this crew and bark the orders?

"The natural leader of the team would seem to be Meteorite, but she demonstrated in issue #7 she's not cut out for it," explains Busiek. "Jolt would seem like a good leader, but she's fairly inexperienced. She's got the heart and the drive but not the skill. Meteorite has the skill but not the heart. The Beetle was not a very good leader of the Sinister Syndicate. Atlas isn't a good leader. Songbird and Techno are not leaders. Zemo has reasons to be mad at them. The question of who will be leading the T-Bolts is a question that will be coming up in the next year."

Even with a new lease on life and one of comics' greatest secrets out in the open, it doesn't appear things are about to get any easier for the T-Bolts. Heroes or villains? Even they aren't quite sure. One thing's for certain, though. Not even a prophetess or the mutant Destiny could see what's in store for them.

"We have more twists and turns and surprises coming, so people who are expecting that after issue #12 the book is gonna settle down and go off in some predictable direction will hopefully be as surprised as they've been all along," says Busiek.

Words From The Wild

BY ROBERT PIOTROWSKI

ARMED WITH QUICK WIT AND EXTRAORDINARY PROWESS, KA-ZAR IS A MATCH FOR ANY OPPONENT. NEVERTHELESS, HE CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT HIS FAITHFUL COMPANION ZABU IS SAYING HALF OF THE TIME. SABRETOOTHED TIGERS, AFTER ALL, AREN'T KNOWN FOR THEIR ELOQUENCE. SEE IF YOU CAN HELP KA-ZAR BY FINDING ALL OF THE WORDS LISTED BELOW IN THIS WORD FIND. THEY MAY APPEAR FORWARDS, BACKWARDS, UP, DOWN, OR DIAGONALLY. THE REMAINING LETTERS WILL REVEAL A MESSAGE FROM ZABU WHEN PLACED IN THE SPACES PROVIDED AS THEY APPEAR FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND TOP TO BOTTOM IN THE PUZZLE.

LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

ANTARCTIC	IDELSON	MUTATES	SUN
ANTI-METAL	JESSE	NATURE	SWING
BENAZA	JOKES	N.Y.C.	TECHNO TOYS
BOOTS	KA-ZAR	O'HARA	TIGER
BOW	KEVIN	PARNIVAL	VINES
BOY	KNIFE	PLANTS	WAID
BRITISH	KUBERT	PLUNDER	WILD
CLIMB	LOINCLOTH	PREHISTORIC	X-MEN
DINOSAUR	MAN-APE	SAURON	ZABU
HOT	MATTHEW	SAVAGE LAND	ZIRA
HUNTS	MEDALLION	SHANNA	

I	T	N	O	S	L	E	D	I	V	C	B	E
C	Y	N	O	H	T	O	H	S	I	L	O	S
B	S	N	S	I	T	T	T	G	N	I	W	S
N	R	A	O	Y	L	O	R	J	E	M	R	E
U	A	I	N	R	O	L	L	E	S	B	A	J
P	E	T	T	B	U	T	A	C	B	G	Z	O
Y	L	P	U	I	E	A	O	D	N	U	A	K
S	O	A	A	R	S	N	S	N	E	I	K	E
P	T	B	N	N	E	H	A	D	H	M	O	S
A	A	N	D	T	A	L	E	Z	L	C	O	L
N	X	R	U	N	S	M	U	T	A	I	E	A
T	S	M	N	H	A	R	A	H	O	T	W	T
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I	U	E	E	F	I	N	K	K	E	V	I	N
C	M	W	D	I	N	O	S	A	U	R	A	A
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HEY, YOU SAVAGES,
ZABU THE SABRETOOTHED TIGER SAYS:

"___ _ ______ ___ _____!"

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1976 PART 2:
BY THE TIME I GET TO PHOENIX

It had been less than a year since the birth of the "new " X-MEN series, and already writer Chris Claremont and artist Dave Cockrum were laying the groundwork for a cosmic epic, the likes of which the old X-MEN book had never seen. The original X-Men had fought the alien Z'nox, but had not had to leave Earth in the process. This time, matters would be quite different.

In issue #97 Cyclops' brother Alex, alias Havok, and his green-haired mutant girlfriend Lorna Dane fell under the control of a mysterious armored figure calling himself Eric the Red. What made this new villain all the more puzzling was the fact that "Eric the Red" was a guise that Cyclops himself had concocted years before; this was a homage that Claremont and Cockrum were paying to the 1960s storyline that had introduced Lorna. It was, by the way, under the new Eric's control that Lorna first assumed her super hero name of Polaris, under which she is known today in X-FACTOR.

The second Eric the Red would prove to be Davan Shakari, an intelligence agent of the new extraterrestrial race that Claremont and Cockrum were introducing, the Shi'ar. In this same issue Professor Xavier began having nightmares about a spaceship, piloted by a being in a space suit and a bug-like helmet, fleeing through space from other starships. The pilot would eventually be revealed as the Shi'ar princess Lilandra, who was in search of help against Shakari's liege, her evil brother D'ken, who now ruled the Shi'ar's galactic empire.

But even the introduction of the Shi'ar takes second place in the history of the X-Men to another major event in 1976. This centered on Jean Grey, alias Marvel Girl. Even though Len Wein had written her out in issue #95 along with most of the other original X-Men, in #97 Claremont brought her back into the series, albeit in an unofficial capacity. The love between Scott Summers and Jean Grey has always been the heart of the X-MEN series, and Claremont was returning it to center stage. As noted in our last installment, issue #98 opened with Scott and Jean on a date in Manhattan's Rockefeller Center on Christmas Eve, briefly crossing the paths of their own creators, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. It was there that two more X-Men, Colossus and Nightcrawler, first encountered their own future girlfriends, Amanda Sefton and Betsy Wilford. Amanda would turn out not only to be Nightcrawler's foster sister but also a sorceress who in recent years has become associated with the British super-team Excalibur.

Nevertheless, this Christmas would hardly prove to be the stuff of warm, nostalgic memories for the X-Men. Jean and other X-Men were attacked and captured by a new breed of the mutant-hunting robots known as the Sentinels. This time, it was not the Sentinels' original creator, Dr. Bolivar Trask, or his son Larry who was behind the robots' rampage, but a fanatic named Dr. Steven Lang, who, as issue #100 would show, had been given virtually unlimited financial backing by an enigmatic organization called the Council of the Chosen.

Lang held Jean and his other captives prisoners on a space station. Xavier and the other X-Men went to the rescue by prevailing upon Xavier's friend Dr. Peter Corbeau, the scientist who headed the solar observatory Starcore, whom Claremont had introduced in INCREDIBLE HULK #148, one of his very first Marvel writing assignments, back in 1972! Corbeau somehow smuggled the mutants onto a space shuttle being launched into orbit, which Corbeau then crash-landed onto the space station!

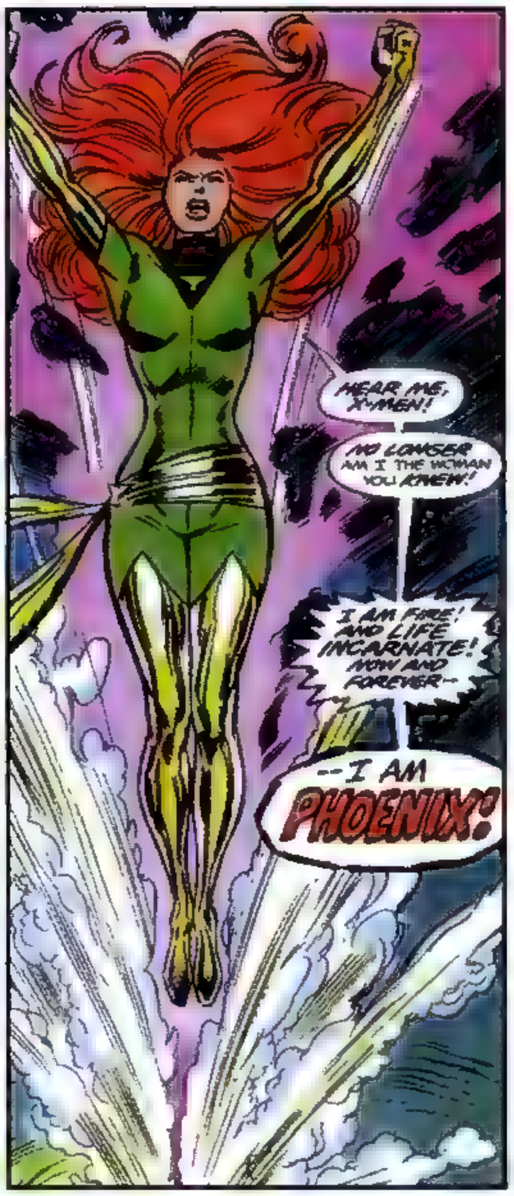
Once the "new" X-Men were all aboard, they found themselves face to face with—the "old" X-Men! It was now X-MEN #100, and a clash between the original and current teams was the obvious way to mark the anniversary. In fact, the "original X-Men" proved to be more of Lang's robots, the "X-Sentinels," and once Wolverine sniffed out the fact they weren't human, the real X-Men made quick work of them.

Lang was defeated, and the space station, in the tradition of secret bases for master villains, was about to blow up. The X-Men and Corbeau hurried aboard the space shuttle and set off for Earth. But a massive solar storm was approaching that would lethally irradiate whoever was sitting in the damaged cockpit, steering the shuttle. Jean courageously volunteered, declaring that her telekinetic powers could protect her from the radiation for a short time—though not long enough to spare her life. Cyclops refused to let her go to her death, but Jean knocked him out telekinetically. Issue #100 ended with perhaps the most suspenseful cliffhanger in the X-Men's history, as Jean, steering the shuttle, was engulfed in the brilliant glow of the solar radiation, knowing this was the end.

But it wasn't. Issue #101 opened with the space shuttle crashing into Sheepshead Bay, off New York City's coast. The X-Men and Corbeau swam out into the bay, and suddenly Jean—or what looked like Jean—rose from beneath the water into the open air, garbed in a skin-tight costume no one had ever seen before. Around her sprung flames that shaped themselves into the form of a gigantic hawk. She passionately proclaimed she was no longer merely Jean Grey but the Phoenix, and then, almost immediately, she collapsed, and the other X-Men rushed her to a hospital.

Not until the following year would readers begin to learn what Jean's apparent transformation into the Phoenix meant. Phoenix was endowed with far greater psionic powers than Marvel Girl had ever possessed. This fit Claremont's agenda of making his female heroes the formidable equals of the men. But with Phoenix he went further: she could tap into the unlimited cosmic energies of the Phoenix Force, making her potentially the most powerful being on Earth.

This issue, #101, thus set up one of the greatest storylines in X-MEN history, or indeed the history of all of Marvel Comics, the Dark Phoenix Saga, culminating with Phoenix's suicide, which would have repercussions in Marvel stories into the 1990s. In time, the Marvel Chronicles will cover this saga and why it proved to be so significant.



But let us return to X-MEN #101 in 1976. While Phoenix convalesced, Claremont and Cockrum sent the X-Men off to Ireland, the homeland of one of their members, Sean Cassidy, the Banshee. There, Sean's ancestral home, Cassidy Keep, had been taken over by his sinister cousin, the mutant Black Tom Cassidy, who made his first appearance in X-MEN #100. Worse, Black Tom had allied himself with the X-Men's longtime foe, the Juggernaut. The friendship and partnership between the Juggernaut and Black Tom gave a new dimension to Juggernaut's character, and the bond between them has persisted right into the present day.

In moving so quickly from outer space to Ireland, Claremont established an important modus operandi for the "new" X-MEN in the late 1970s. The series was continually on the move, ranging all over—and even off—the planet, pitting the heroes against a wide variety of adversaries in an endlessly changing series of colorful locations. One never knew quite what to expect from a new issue of X-MEN in these years, but it was always an enjoyable surprise.

The Cassidy Keep story would not be resolved until the 1977 issues. One reason why was that the December 1976 issue, #102, took an unexpected detour to Africa via flashback. In the course of the battle against the Juggernaut, the X-Man Storm suffered a severe attack of claustrophobia, and Claremont and Cockrum took the opportunity to explain the attack by revealing her origin at length.

Storm was Ororo Munroe, the daughter of an African-American photojournalist, David Munroe, and his African bride N'Dare, and, in fact, Storm had not been born in Africa, as readers had assumed, but in New York City. The Munroes went to Cairo, Egypt when Ororo was still a small child. Their apartment building was blown up in a terrorist attack, killing Ororo's parents outright, and leaving Ororo herself alive but buried under the rubble: hence, her enduring claustrophobia.

Claremont and Cockrum went on to show how Ororo grew up on the streets of Cairo, surviving by stealing, and eventually coming under the protection of master thief Achmed el-Gibar, who taught her to become the greatest pickpocket and lockpicker in Cairo.

As a teenager Ororo sensed her destiny calling from the South, and therefore trekked across the Sahara Desert by herself, finally reaching the Serengeti Plains, where she employed her newly emerged mutant powers to help the tribespeople there; in return,

they worshipped her as a goddess. And that is where Professor Xavier had found the adult Storm in GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1.

Although at the readers did not suspect it, a clue to the future of THE X-MEN could be found in the pages of another series Claremont was writing, IRON FIST. On the splash page of issue #8 a mugging is in progress, and one of the victims is future X-MEN artist John Byrne, drawn by himself. Now a comics legend, the Claremont-Byrne team had actually begun the year before, with Iron Fist's final issue in MARVEL PREMIERE. Byrne had been working at Charlton Comics, and Claremont, enthusiastic about the Canadian artist's work, had been campaigning to get him assignments at Marvel. When Iron Fist left MARVEL PREMIERE for his own bimonthly comic book in October, 1975, Claremont and Byrne went with him. Through the course of 1976 they created multimillionaire Jeryn Hogarth, the future financial backer of Heroes for Hire, and continued to develop the team of female detectives Colleen Wing and Misty Knight. Colleen had been introduced earlier as the daughter of Iron Fist's mentor, Professor Lee Wing, and proved to be a martial artist of considerable skill herself. Oddly enough Misty Knight, her partner, had made her first appearance as an anonymous character in MARVEL TEAM-UP #1 four years earlier.

The "new" X-Men first met Marvel's signature character, Spider-Man, and made their first major guest appearance, as the co-stars of the first MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL. Oddly enough, this story is set after the Juggernaut storyline, which was still unfinished, since a fully recovered Phoenix participates in the action. Claremont and collaborator Bill Mantlo pitted the new mutant team against "the Lords of Light and Darkness," a group of human beings who had been transformed into avatars of the Hindu gods.

Now the Spider-Man empire was really beginning to expand. One companion book, MARVEL TEAM-UP, was not enough; December 1976 was the cover date for the brand new series PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, written by prolific Spider-scripter Gerry Conway. Whereas MARVEL TEAM-UP paired Spidey with other Marvel heroes in self-contained stories, the new PETER PARKER book followed his ongoing solo adventures and subplots, just as AMAZING SPIDER-MAN did. (It was thus comparable to SUPERMAN and ACTION or BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS at DC.) SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, as it is known today, thus set the precedent for a new age in which a successful super hero series would keep generating companion titles. Eventually, as you all surely know, there would be an entire family of Spider-titles, as there are X-Men-related comics, and until recently, "families" of books about the Avengers and even the Punisher.

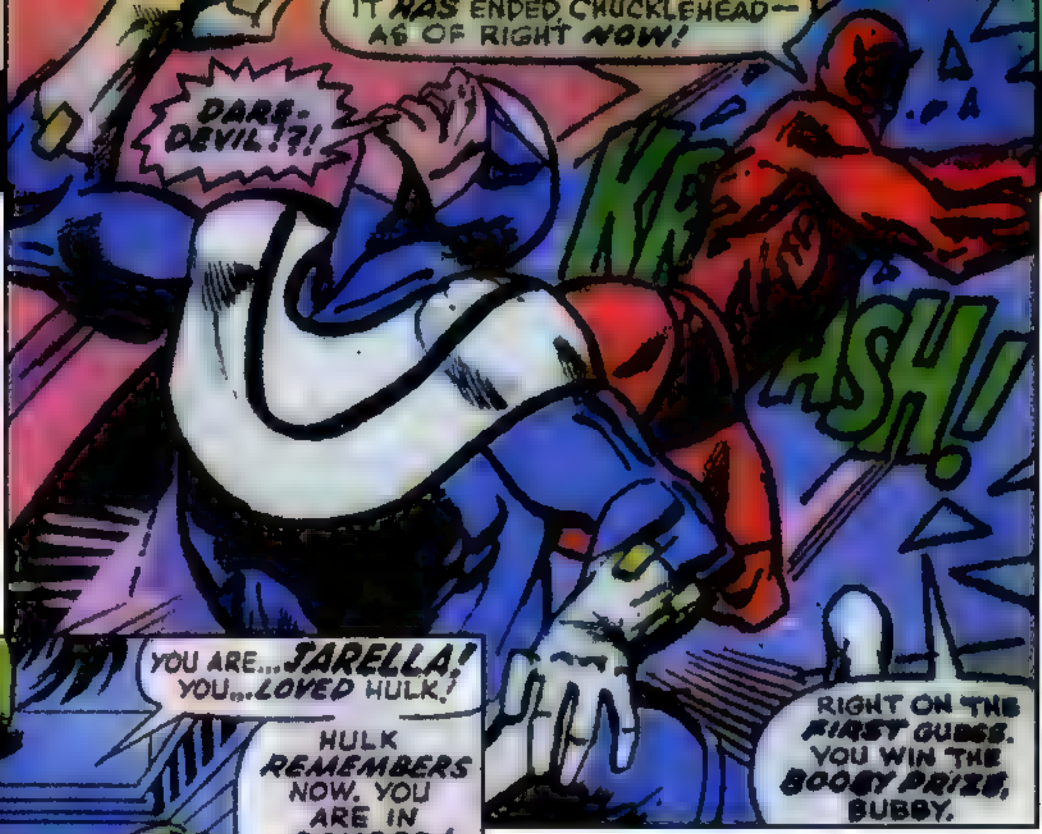
In 1976, though, the main developments in Spider-Man's life continued to occur only in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. Despite the interruption by Spidey's tussle with a new costumed village, the Mirage, his friends Betty Brant and Ned Leeds were finally married in AMAZING #156. The story had a joyful ending, since no one then at Marvel had any idea Ned would eventually be framed for being the Hobgoblin and murdered.

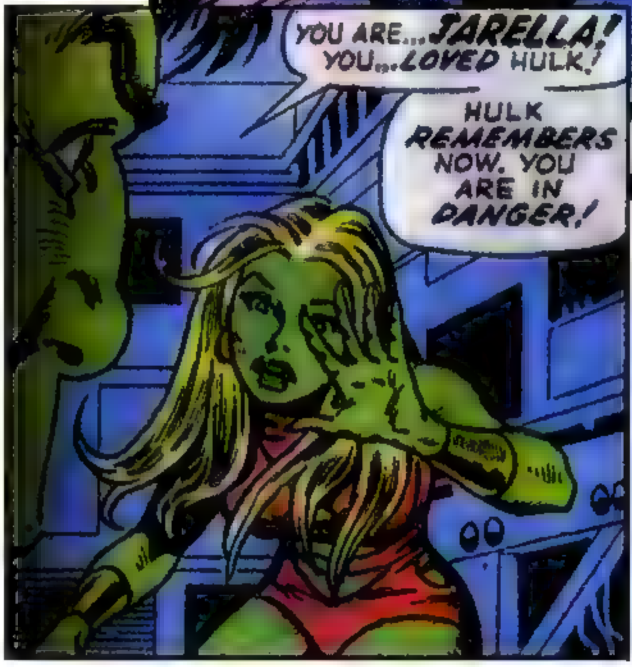
In issues #161 and #162 Spider-Man teamed up with both the new X-Man Nightcrawler and the Punisher against a grotesquely scarred criminal named Jigsaw, who was destined to become the Punisher's most frequent and implacable adversary.

Issue #162 also saw the introduction of Dr. Marla Madison, a scientist whom J. Jonah Jameson commissioned to create a new Spider-Slayer robot. Yes, it was their mutual interest in crushing your friendly neighborhood web-slinger that first brought these two lovebirds together, and today Dr. Marla Madison is J. Jonah Jameson's wife.

Over in DAREDEVIL Writer Marv Wolfman and artist Bob Brown made perhaps their most impressive contribution to the series with issue #131, in which they introduced the Man Without Fear's deadliest enemy, Bullseye. Even then Bullseye was a ruthless criminal, with the incredible skill to use virtually any object he could throw as a lethal weapon; it would be Frank Miller, years later, who made it clear that Bullseye was also murderously insane. (Coincidentally, issue #131 also introduced Daily Bugle reporter Jake Conover, who returned to prominence in the recent HOBGOBLIN LIVES limited series.)

Even as one major character joined DAREDEVIL, another one left HULK permanently. It was the prominent writer and comics aficionado Harlan Ellison who had introduced Jarella into THE INCREDIBLE HULK. She was the green-skinned princess of a "microcosmic" world on which





the Hulk retained the personality and intelligence of Bruce Banner. She loved the Hulk deeply, and readers at the time may well have wondered if she, not Betty Ross, was the woman who should marry the tortured Banner.

The triangle was unintentionally resolved with INCREDIBLE HULK #205, in which the Hulk battled a decidedly forgettable opponent called the Crypto-Man. In the course of the fight, a wall began toppling towards a small child. Jarella, who had come to Earth from her "micro-world," pushed the child to safety only to be crushed by the collapsing wall herself. Jarella was dead, and, unlike so many deaths in Marvel continuity, this one was never reversed.

But Jarella was not supposed to be dead! Len Wein, who wrote the story, explained for years afterwards at conventions that he had not intended to kill her. Jarella, he said, was an alien, and he intended to demonstrate that even though the impact would have killed an Earthwoman, Jarella had a different physiology and could have been revived! Unfortunately, Wein left HULK before he could resurrect Jarella, and succeeding writers just assumed she was really dead, so dead she stayed! (Not only that, but Jarella ended up dying the same way Captain Stacy had in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN only a few years before!)

And had the Hulk/Banner loved Betty or Jarella more? The question was never resolved or even seriously investigated. It remains a mystery to this day, perhaps even to the Hulk himself.

Meanwhile, Wein set up a slowly unraveling mystery in the pages of THOR, where Odin, lord of Asgard, began acting ever more arbitrarily, more like a tyrant, and, in fact, totally out of character. That was indeed the case, because it turned out that Odin was being impersonated by one of Asgard's greatest enemies, the monster called the Mangog. Thor and his Asgardian allies, of course, ultimately managed to defeat the creature, but the question remained: where was the real Odin? The mystery would carry over into 1977, when Thor and his companions would embark on a quest to find him.

Once again, Thor could count on the goddess Sif as one of his allies. She had seemingly sacrificed her life force and her very existence to save the dying Jane Foster, the mortal woman Thor once had loved, but in issue #249 Foster vanished and Sif took her place. Perhaps the idea was that Sif and Jane would now be two sides of the same being, just as Thor and his mortal identity of Dr. Don Blake were. It was an experiment that would not last very long.

The 1976 THOR ANNUAL, written by Steve Englehart, depicted a war in ages past between the gods of Norse mythology, the Asgardians, and the Olympian gods, who had been worshipped by the peoples of ancient Greece and Rome. The war, though, was halted before it truly began, as the result of a secret meeting between the heads of their respective pantheons, Odin and Zeus. Strangely, this story, apparently set in the distant past, purported to recount Thor's first meeting with Hercules and the Olympian gods, and thereby contradicted Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's own tale of Thor's first encounter with Hercules in 1965's JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY ANNUAL #1. Once again, this is a question that has never been adequately resolved.

And 1976 saw another ending. Jim Starlin's brilliant WARLOCK series had failed to attract enough readers and came to an end with issue #15. But the curtain did not fall until Starlin had concluded Warlock's struggle against his own dark side incarnate, the Magus. Nor until after the saga of the original Star-Thief, a bedridden man with the enormous psionic power to extinguish the stars. Or even a charmingly funny story about Warlock's friend Pip the Troll and his encounter with the sensually named Miss Heater Delight. In what turned out to be the final issue, Warlock himself suffered a strange fate: his body expanded to gigantic size. Perhaps Starlin would have resolved the situation in the next issue, but abruptly the series halted.

One Marvel chartacter, though, was reaching his peak of success with incredible speed in 1976, enough to warrant his own presidential campaign, as we shall see next time.

—Peter Sanderson

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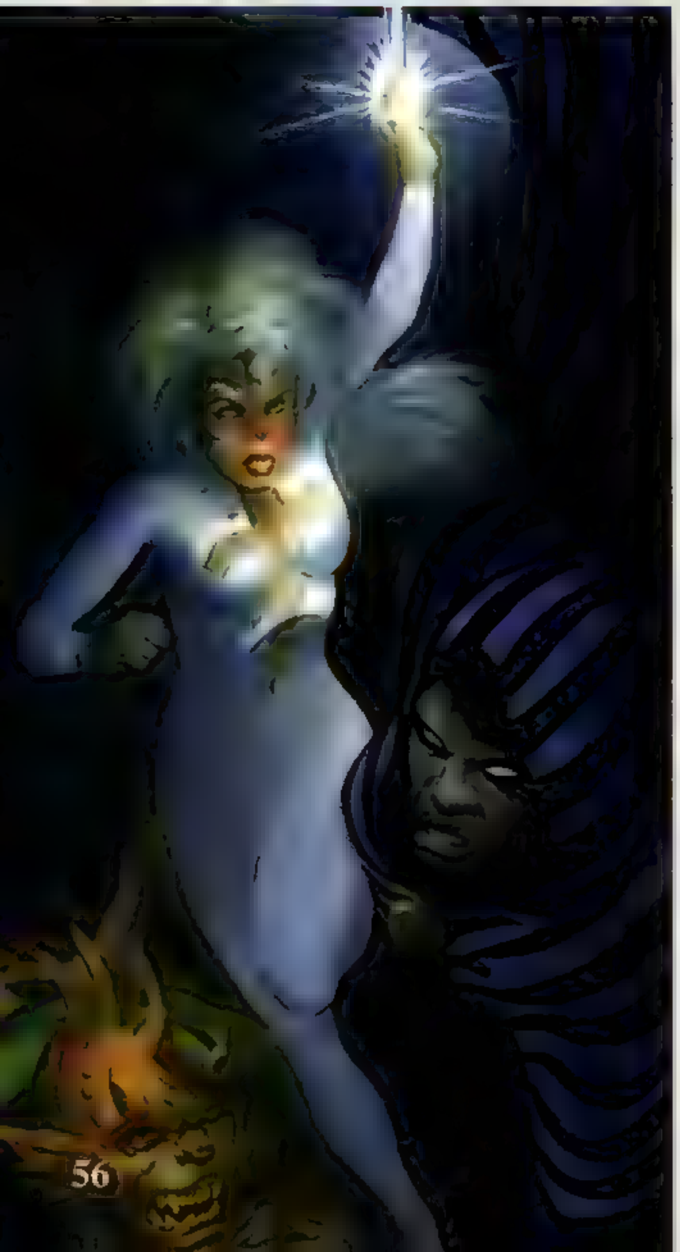

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The fate of **Karen Page** rests in her lover's hands as she stands accused of murder—a crime that she didn't commit! 2.99

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SCOTT LOBDELL/SALVADOR LARROCA/ART THIBERT
After his startling debut in FANTASTIC FOUR #3, the mysterious **Crucible** is back! Facing their greatest threat since their return to the Marvel Universe, it's Fantastic Four vs. Crucible! 1.99

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MARK WAID/LOUIS SMALL/ROB STULL
Ka-Zar continues to lose control over the Savage Land as Shanna's power grows to dangerous levels! 1.99

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COVER BY JORDAN RASKIN
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LEN KAMINSKI/MIKE MCKONE/MARK MCKENNA
Is it the end of the Marvel Universe—or the beginning of a bold new era? That's what the heroes of the year 2099 must determine! 5.99

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The world believes that **Nick Fury**, Marvel's premeire super-spy, was killed by the Punisher. Tell that to **Sharon Carter**, the sexy super-spy code-named **Agent 13**. Carter (Captain America's femme fatale) is determined to find him—so she can kill him! 2.99

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Featuring the return of the classic Iron Man foe known as Firebrand! 1.99

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STARRING HANNIBAL KING
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JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY kicks off a new two-part storyarc as the spotlight is swung on Hannibal King—the private eye who just happens to be a vampire! 1.99

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Guest-starring Doctor Strange! Bruce Banner, seeking help in controlling his transformations into the rampaging **Hulk**, pays a house call to the ever-mysterious Master of the Mystic Arts! 1.50

X-MEN 2099: OASIS
NEW COVER BY GREG HILDEBRANDT
NEW VARIANT COVER BY TIM HILDEBRANDT
JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/TIM & GREG HILDEBRANDT
Available again! Released in conjunction with 2099: MANIFEST DESTINY, this 64-page one-shot features a self-contained adventure starring the X-Men 2099—fully painted by the **Brothers Hildebrandt!** 5.99

ON SALE MARCH 18

CAPTAIN AMERICA NO. 5
MARK WAID/RON GARNEY/BOB WIACEK
Rocked by the events of the last issue, Cap decides he's had enough: he's going to destroy **Hydra** once and for all—and god help anyone who gets in his way! *1.99*

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The origins of Captain America, Nick Fury, Ka-zar and Professor X! *24.99*

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Guest-starring Deadpool! It's a super-powered battle royal in Symkaria when the H4H team of **Iron Fist, Luke Cage** and the maniac Merc take on **Silver Sable** and her **Wild Pack** for possession of deadly chemical weapons! *1.99*

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PETER DAVID/ADAM KUBERT/MARK FARMER
It's the Hulk vs. the Troygens and their new ally, the Silver Surfer! Armageddon thought his son, who was killed by the Hulk, could be brought back to life. But now those attempts have failed and he's out for blood! *1.99*

THING/SHE-HULK
TODD DEZAGO/BRYAN HITCH/PAUL NEARY
Last seen in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #236, the fire-breathing fury known as **Dragon Man** is on the run—hunted by those rotten agents of **Roxxon**! They've chased the purple people eater down into New York Cith's subway system, endangering hundreds of commuters —and two of those ticked off citizens just happen to be the ever lovin' blue-eyed **Thing** and the savage **She-Hulk**! *2.99*

THUNDERBOLTS NO. 14
KURT BUSIEK/MARK BAGLEY/SCOTT HANNA
The **Thunderbolts** stand as a world's only hope against an army from Kosmos! Can the squad redeem themselves in the eyes of their captors and win their freedom? And what plans are both **Meteorite** and **Citizen V** hatching—and how might those plans tear the team apart?! *1.99*

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STARRING THE AVENGERS
TOM DEFALCO/SERGIO CARIELLO/KEITH CHAMPAGNE
"What if the Avengers battled the Carnage Cosmic?" *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 25

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The time has come to determine: Who will be an Avenger? The old order changeth and a new team comes to the fore, galvanized for the coming millennium! Who makes the cut? *1.99*

DEADPOOL NO. 16
JOE KELLY/WALTER MCDANIEL/ANIBAL RODRIGUEZ
While on a bizarre mission in the Middle East, Deadpool faces up to the crimes of his recent past and the loved ones he hurt. *1.99*

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LARRY HAMA/MIKE DEODATO JR./SCOTT KOBLISH
Elektra and **Nina** make their terrifying climb to reach the **Chaste**—where Nina is accepted and Elektra is given the big boot! *1.99*

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MARVEL VISION continues to deliver the definitive new regarding the mighty Marvel Universe with exclusive interviews, behind-the-scenes sneak peeks, coverage of all Marvel titles on sale in May and much, much more! *1.99*

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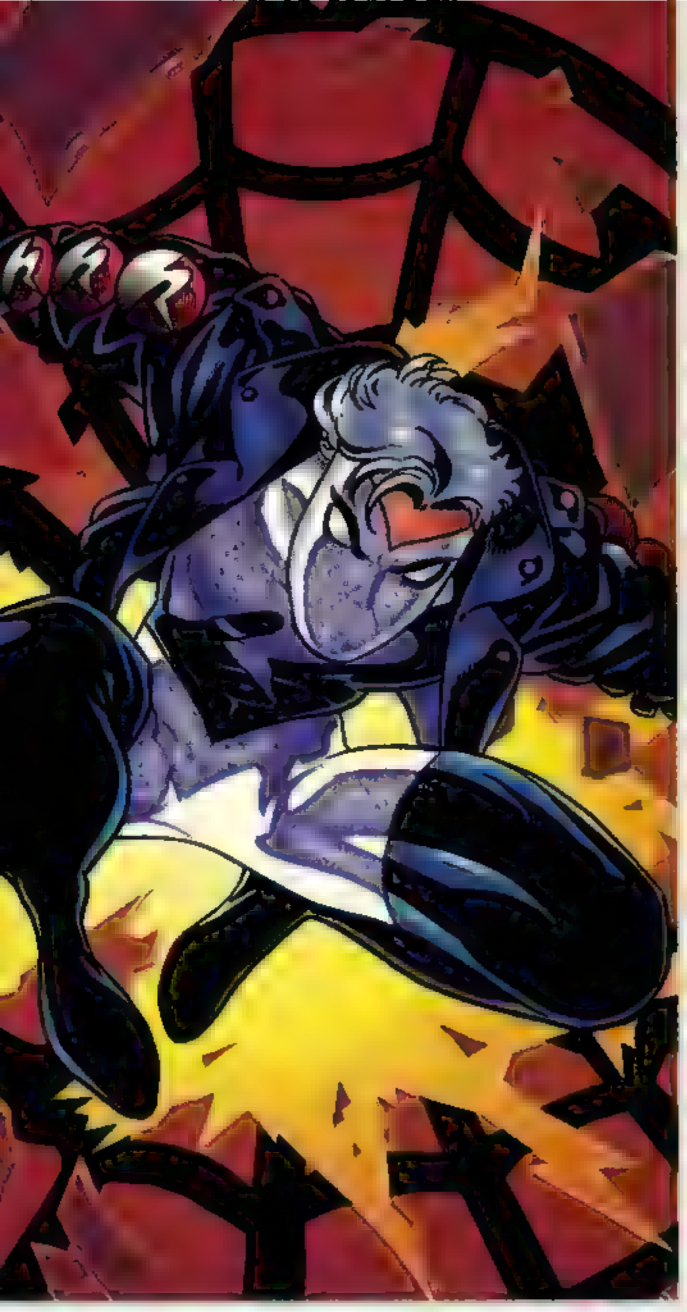
JOHN OSTRANDER & JOE EDKIN/DEREC AUCOIN/JASON MARTIN
From the pages of HEROES FOR HIRE come the Black Knight and new writer John Ostrander! Quicksilver and **Crystal** return home from their ordeal in Attilan, only to find the **Knights of Wundagore** gone! *1.99*

SILVER SURFER NO. 139
J.M. DEMATTEIS/ROGER CRUZ/MATT RYAN
The **Silver Surfer**, accompanied by **Alicia Masters**, assumes a human guise and begins a journey across America—and the world—to learn more about humanity. *1.99*



SPIDER-MAN

ON SALE MARCH 4

SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN

NO. 27 **"IDENTITY CRISIS"**
DOUBLE COVER BY MIKE WIERINGO
TODD DEZAGO/MIKE WIERINGO/RICHARD CASE

Hounded, hunted and harried, Peter Parker is forced to question the very existence of Spider-Man! But Peter just can't abdicate his "great responsibility"—so he adopts an brand new identity! Enter now the high flying **Hornet**! And in true mighty Marvel fashion, Peter puts his new costumed persona to the ultimate test when he tangles with the techno-thief called **Phaeton**! *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 11

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN NO. 434

"IDENTITY CRISIS"
DOUBLE COVER BY JOE BENNETT
TOM DEFALCO/JOE BENNETT/BUD LAROSA

To throw off his pursuers, Peter Parker assumes a second persona—and makes his first appearance as **Ricochet**! And as soon as he makes his debut he's recruited by the deadly **Delilah** in her war against the mysterious **Black Tarantula**! Plus: the return of **Alison Mongrain** and that oh-so-interesting package that **Norman Osborn** gave her back in PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #75! *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 18

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN NO. 91

"IDENTITY CRISIS"
DOUBLE COVER BY JOHN ROMITA JR.
HOWARD MACKIE/JOHN ROMITA JR./SCOTT HANNA

Determined to clear Spider-Man's name in the murder of Joey Z., Peter Parker wades even deeper into the morass of the New York City crime scene. And what better way to do so than with a brand-new persona as the dynamic lurker of the shadows—**Dusk**! Using the costume that he picked up in last month's Negative Zone adventure, Peter becomes the third in his quartet of new characters! *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 25

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

NO. 257 **"IDENTITY CRISIS"**
DOUBLE COVER BY TBA
J.M. DEMATTEIS/LUKE ROSS/DAN GREEN

This time it's turnabout for **Norman Osborn** as he hires the newest super-hero in town for his own nefarious purposes—not realizing that the powerful, pulse-pounding **Prodigy** is actually his nemesis Peter Parker! Now it's payback time, but first Prodigy must take on his first foe, the clever, calculating and cataclysmic **Conundrum**! *1.99*

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED NO. 20

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN/JOE BENNETT/JOE PIMENTEL

Spider-Man teams with vampire hunter Hannibal King to go up against Lilith, Daughter of Dracula! Lilith has plans to make New York a city of the undead, with herself at the top and Hannibal King as her concubine! *2.99*

X-MEN

ON SALE MARCH 4

CABLE NO. 54
JOE CASEY/LADRONN/JUAN VLASCO

It's amazing double jungle action as Cable begins a new adventure that takes him to the African nation of Wakanda and lands him smack dab in the middle of **Black Panther** territory! *1.99*

GENERATION X: UNDERGROUND
JIM MAHFOOD

Independent creator **Jim Mahfood** cooks up three funky fresh stories: "Banshees's Angels" (starring the girrrls of Gen X as hip, karate-chopping, gun-toting, butt-kicking '70s' detectives), "The Big Game" (and unexpected contest of video game will between Skin and M) and "Half-A-Face" (a solo Chamber caper). *2.50*

MAVERICK NO. 9
JORGE GONZALEZ/JIMMY CHEUNG & LEO FERNANDEZ/ANDREW PEPOY

Maverick journeys to Germany to apprehend the **Confessor** and collect the bounty on his head, but the confrontation with his old enemy uncovers questions concerning Maverick's past—and a secret that may well destroy him! *1.99*

UNCANNY X-MEN NO. 355
"NORTH & SOUTH" PART 2 OF 2

STEVE SEAGLE/CHRIS BACHALO/TIM TOWNSEND

The all-new **Alpha Flight** comes to arrest **Wolverine** for the murder of their fallen teammate, but Logan decides he doesn't want to be taken down for a crime he didn't commit! *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 11

GENERATION X NO. 38
LARRY HAMA/TERRY DODSON

New regular writer **Larry Hama** (WOLVERINE) bids a warm welcome to fan-favorite penciler **Terry Dodson** (STORM, GEN 13 BOOTLEG) with a story that hits the ground with the pedal to the metal! Every entity in the universe faces "amalgamation" unless the **Generation X** squad can stop the madness! *1.99*

X-FACTOR NO. 145
HOWARD MACKIE/DUNCAN ROULEAU/JAMIE MENDOZA

As **Havok** helps the **X.U.E.** adjust to their new lives in the 20th Century, **Greystone** encounters a young boy who, in their timeline, will grow up to become a mutant-hunting hound. *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 18

EXCALIBUR NO. 120
BEN RAAB/MELVIN RUBI/ROB HUNTER

While **Douglock** attempts to sabotage **Moira McTaggert's** Legay Virus experiment (in an effort to free **Wolfsbane** from quarantine), **Pete Wisdom** and **Kitty Pryde** resolve their romantic problems, changing the face of Excalibur forever! *1.99*

ON SALE MARCH 18

X-MAN NO. 38
TERRY KAVANAGH/CRISS CROSS/BUD LAROSA
X-Man faces off against Spider-Man—round 2! *1.99*

X-MEN NO. 75
WRAPAROUND 5TH COLOR INK COVER
JOE KELLY/GERMAN GARCIA/ART THIBERT
It's the culmination of plotlines that have been building for months as the newest members (**Marrow**, **Dr. Reyes** and **Maggott**) come together and become offical **X-Men** as **Wolverine** and the classic team faces the threat of the demonic N'Garai! *2.99*

X-MEN/ALPHA FLIGHT NO. 1 (OF 2)
BEN RAAB/JOHN CASSADY
Set in the classic Chris Claremont/John Byrne X-Men era, the mighty mutants (**Cyclops**, **Colossus**, **Wolverine**, **Nightcrawler**, **Storm**, and **Kitty Pryde**) collide with the original team from the Great White North (**Guardian**, **Snowbird**, **Northstar**, **Aurora**, **Shaman**, **Puck** and **Sasquatch**) when the Arian evil that is **Strucker** sets out to prove that mutants are not the superior race! *2.99*

ON SALE MARCH 25

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING: CABLE & MACHINE MAN
WRAPAROUND COVER BY RICK LEONARDI
MICHAEL HIGGINS & KARL BOLLERS/RICK LEONARDI
When a series of bizarre attacks occur at the clinic where Bastion is being held and studied by **S.H.I.E.L.D.** scientists, **G.W. Bridge** calls in the one man he trusts to investigate—**Cable**! Bu t the Askani'son may have bitten off even more than even he can chew when he faces not only Bastion, but Marvel's original misunderstood mechanoid: **Machine Man**! Has this once-heroic robot joined Bastion's campaign of anti-mutant hatred? *2.99*

WOLVERINE NO. 124
TOM DEFALCO/DENYS COWAN
Guest-starring Captain America! Ladies and Gentlemen and children of all ages, in one corner we have the titanic tag team of The Best There Is At What He Does and the Living Legend of W.W. II! In the other we have the all-new menace of the **Rascal**! *1.99*

X-FORCE NO. 77
JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/ADAM POLLINA/MARK MORALES
Reignfire sics super-charged skinheads against X-Force! Meanwhile, it's serious soap opera action as Sunfire and Meltdown deal with the consequences of their actions from last issue. *1.99*

COOL MARVEL STUFF

Bowen Designs

INCREDIBLE HULK BRONZE STATUE

Irradiated by Gamma Rays! Transformed by anger! Sculpted by Randy Bowen! The legendary Jack Kirby was the first artist to capture the essence of Marvel's incredible Hulk. Now, working from the designs of Kirby, Bowen has sculpted this loving bronze tribute to one of the greatest comic book characters of all time. The second release in the "World's Greatest Comics" line of bronze statues, this classic rendition of the Hulk captures him in post-transformation form, arms raised against an unseen but formidable foe. Sculpted in massive 1/6th scale, each piece is mounted on a custom slab of black Spanish marble and includes a hand-rubbed finish. Each sculpture will also come complete with a certificate of authenticity hand-signed by Hulk co-creator Stan Lee and Randy Bowen. Each release is limited to just 100 castings, and after production is completed, all molds will be destroyed.

Suggested Retail Price $2,500.00

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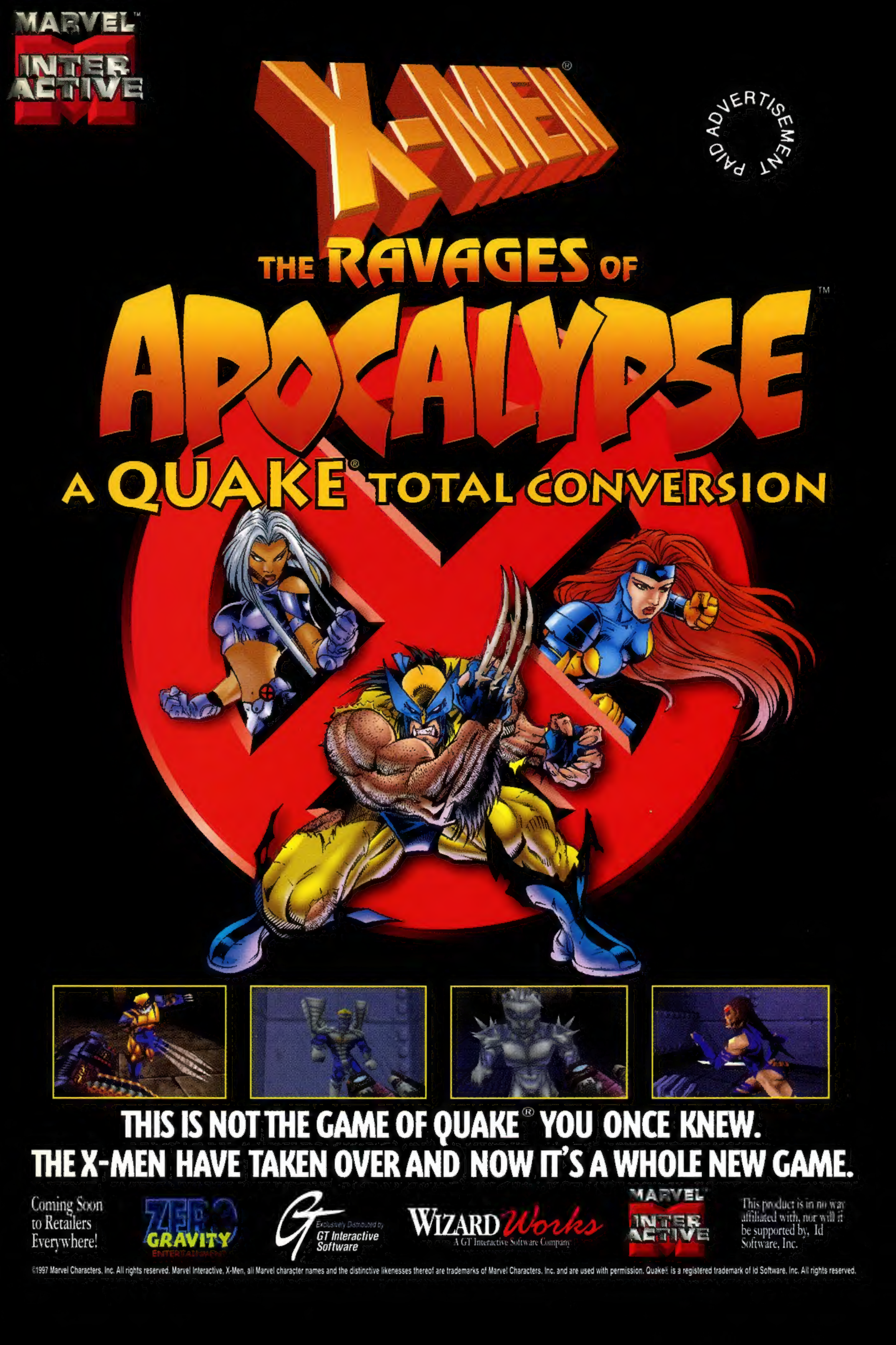
- WRITER MARV WOLFMAN AND THE PHASES OF MOON KNIGHT
- A CHAT WITH MARVEL EDITOR TOM BREVOORT
- MORE LI'L MARVELS
- VINCE GIARRANO'S TIME SLIP
- MARVEL AT WAR
- STEVE SEAGLE'S BIG BREAK
- ANDY MANGELS'S REEL MARVEL
- MARVEL'S SILLIEST MOMENTS
- MARVEL CHRONICLES AND MORE!



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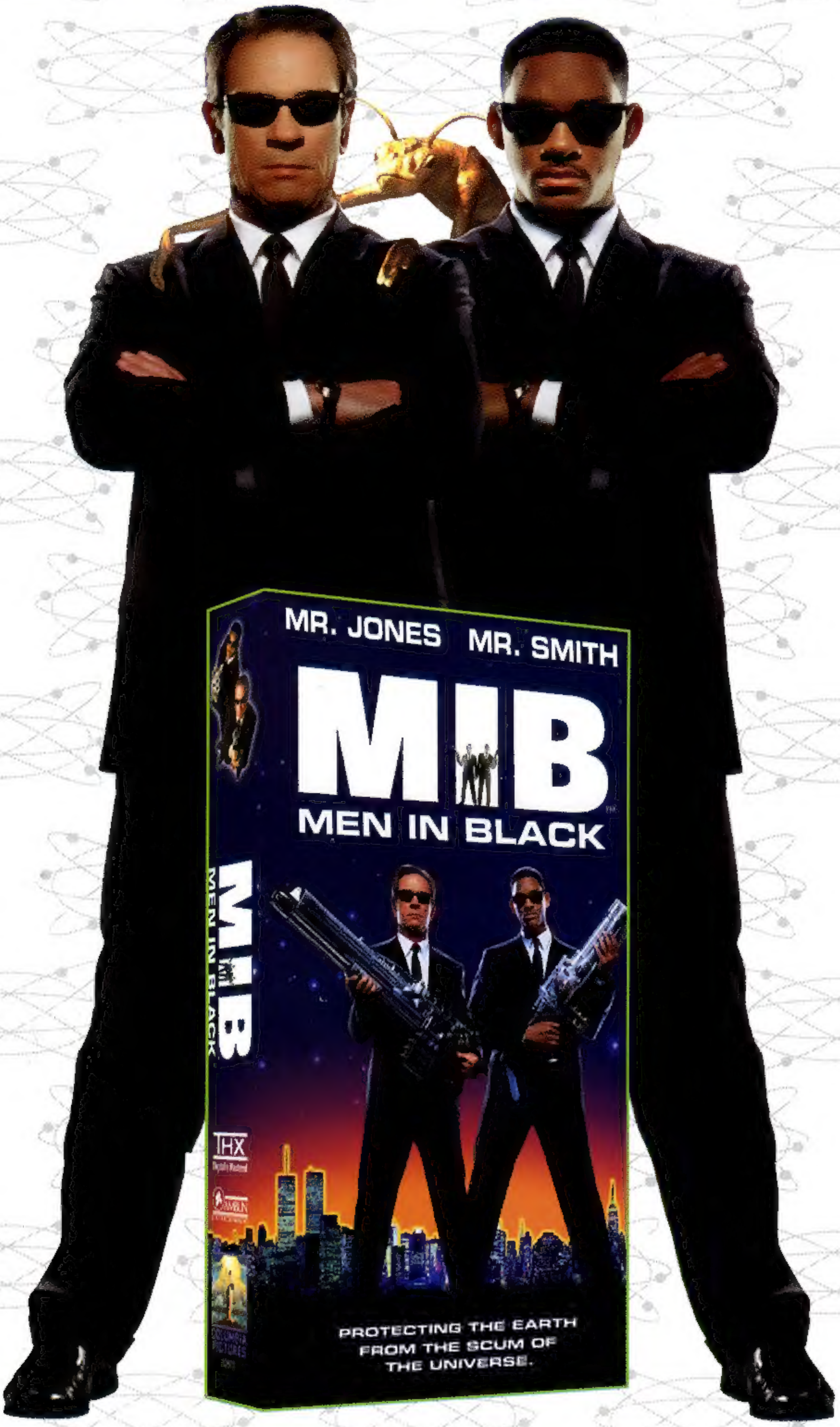

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